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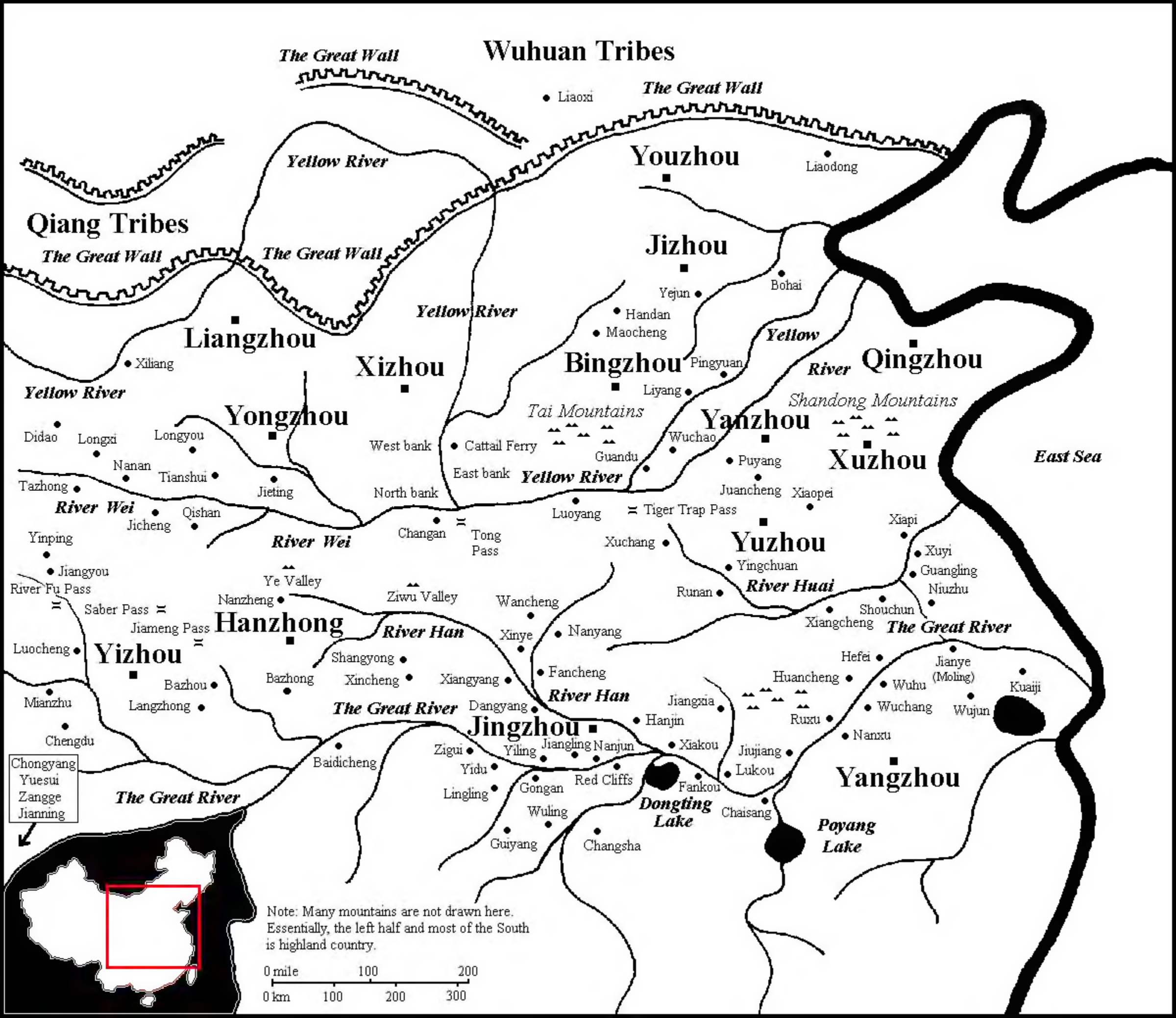
SANGOKUSHI

48

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

MENG HUO

YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

MAJOR CHARACTERS OF SANGOKUSHI

CAI MAO:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU BIAO, WHO BECAME THE SUPREME ADMIRAL OF WEI'S NAVY WHEN JINGZHOU SURRENDERED TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 25, HE IS FRAMED BY ZHOU YU'S PLOT AND THUS EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

CAO CAO MENGDE:
THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. RISES TO BECOME KING OF WEI BUT DECLINES TO BECOME EMPEROR HIMSELF. PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS IN VOLUME 42.

CAO HONG:
YOUNGER COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL.

CAO PI:
ELDEST SON OF CAO CAO. SUCCEEDS TO KING OF WEI AFTER HIS FATHER'S DEATH AND SOON DETHRONES THE LAST HAN EMPEROR TO BECOME AN EMPEROR OF A NEW DYNASTY.

CAO REN:
COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL. PORTRAYED AS BRAVE BUT HOT-TEMPERED IN THE STORY.

CHENG GONG:
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH HIM AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HOWEVER, HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. IN VOLUME 14, HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH LU BU.

CHENG YU:
IMPORTANT AND LOYAL STRATEGIST SERVING CAO CAO.

CHEN DENG:
THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU'S SUBORDINATE. HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.

CHEN GUI:
FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL. DESPITE SECRETLY WORKING TOGETHER WITH LIU BEI AGAINST CAO CAO, CAO CAO SPARES HIS LIFE AND ALLOWS HIM TO CONTINUE LIVING IN XUZHOU.

DIAN WEI:
CAO CAO'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, "E LAI," IN REFERENCE TO THE GENERAL OF THE SAME NAME WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU OF SHANG. IN VOLUME 12, HE WAS KILLED DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO.

DIAO CHAN:
A MAID TO WANG YUN, WHO RAISED HER AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO BY HAVING HER SEDUCE BOTH MEN. IN VOLUME 8, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL.

DONG CHENG:
ELDER STATESMAN OF HAN WHO IS EMPEROR XIAN'S CONFIDANT. EMPEROR XIAN SECRETELY ASKS HIM TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, WHO NOW RULES THE IMPERIAL COURT AS CHANCELLOR. IN VOLUME 17, HE IS EXECUTED AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT IS FOUND OUT BY CAO CAO.

DONG ZHUO:
GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZED CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATED HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, BECOMING AN INFAMOUS TYRANT. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.

EMPRESS HE:
ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS AND SHE ROSE TO BECOME THE EMPRESS, UTILIZING RUTHLESS MEANS. HOWEVER, SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER AND KILLED BY DONG ZHUO WHEN HE CAME TO POWER.

FA ZHENG:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG, BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI DURING HIS CONQUEST OF SHU. HE IS ONE OF LIU BEI'S KEY STRATEGISTS.

GAN NING:
FORMER-PIRATE WHO IS NOW A FIRECE GENERAL OF WU.

GONGSUN ZAN:
GOVERNOR OF BEIPING, WHO WAGES WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO FOR KILLING HIS YOUNG BROTHER. IN VOLUME 15, YUAN SHAO'S ARMY CONQUERS BEIPING, CAUSING GONGSUN ZAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

GUAN PING:
GUAN YU'S ADOPTED SON AS OF VOLUME 19. SERVES ALONGSIDE HIS FATHER UNTIL THEIR DEATH IN VOLUME 42.

GUAN XING:
GUAN YU'S SECOND SON, WHO BECOMES A PROMINENT SHU OFFICER AFTER HIS FATHER'S DEATH.

GUAN YU YUNCHANG:
SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. AFTER THE FAILED SIEGE ON FANCHENG, HE IS EVENTUALLY CAUGHT BY WU FORCES AND PROMPTLY EXECUTED IN VOLUME 42.

GUO JIA:
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. HE DIES FROM ILLNESS DURING CAO CAO'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE YUAN FAMILY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

HE JIN:
ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER ROSE TO BECOME EMPRESS HE. HE IS KILLED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS DURING THEIR POWER STRUGGLE IN VOLUME 3.

HUANG GAI:
LOYAL GENERAL OF WU, WHOSE FAMILY HAS SERVED THE SUN FAMILY FOR THREE GENERATIONS.

HUANG ZHONG:
AN ELDERLY WARRIOR GENERAL RENOWNED ESPECIALLY FOR HIS SKILL WITH THE BOW. FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT DEFECTS TO LIU BEI IN VOLUME 28. FALLS IN BATTLE AGAINST WU FORCES IN VOLUME 43.

HUA XIN:
WEI MINISTER WHO RISES TO BECOME CHANCELLOR OF WEI UNDER CAO PI'S REIGN.

JIANG QIN:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI, BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR SUN CE'S FATHER, SUN JIAN.

JIA XU:
FORMER STRATEGIST OF ZHANG XIU, WHO PLOTTED A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO, WHICH LEFT DIAN WEI DEAD. AS OF VOLUME 16, HE HAS DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR.

LI DIAN:
SCHOLARLY GENERAL UNDER THE SERVICE OF CAO CAO.

LI RU:
CUNNING ADVISOR TO DONG ZHUO. WITH HIS ADVICE, DONG ZHUO FIRMLY SECURES HIS SEAT AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH DONG ZHUO WHEN LU BU BETRAYS THEM.

LIU BIAO:
THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO SICKNESS IN VOLUME 22 AND THE CONSEQUENT SUCCESSION CRISIS ALLOWS CAO CAO TO TAKE OVER JINGZHOU.

LIU BEI XUANDE:
THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. A VIRTUOUS MAN, WHO CLAIMS DESCENT FROM EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI. HE BECOMES AN EMPEROR AND ESTABLISHES A SUCCESOR-DYNASTY TO HAN IN VOLUME 43.

LIU FENG:
LIU BEI'S ADOPTED SON. ORIGINALLY THE NEPHEW OF LIU MI, HE WAS ADOPTED UPON FIRST SIGHT BY LIU BEI WHO TOOK A LIKING TO HIM IN VOLUME 21. HE IS UNFORTUNATELY EXECUTED BY LIU BEI IN VOLUME 43 AFTER DENYING AID TO GUAN YU.

LIU QI:
ELDEST SON OF LIU BIAO WHO TEMPORARILY LOSES HIS INHERITANCE OF JINGZHOU DUE TO CAI MAO'S PLOT. IN VOLUME 29, HE PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS AND THE RIGHTFUL OWNERSHIP OF JINGZHOU CONTINUES TO BE DEBATED BETWEEN SUN QUAN AND LIU BEI.

LIU ZHANG:
INCOMPETENT RULER OF SHU (ALTERNATIVE NAME FOR YIZHOU). HE SEEKS LIU BEI'S HELP TO FEND OFF ZHANG LU, BUT RELATIONS SOON SOUR AND LIU BEI USURPS HIS RULE OVER SHU. AS OF VOLUME 35, HE IS EXILED TO JINGZHOU.

LU BU:
ALTHOUGH REPUTED TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR, HE IS HOT-HEADED AND RARELY HEEDS WISE ADVICE. IN VOLUME 14, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES, AND EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

LU MENG:
FIRECE WU GENERAL, WHO AT LAST CONQUERS JINGZHOU FOR SUN QUAN, CAPTURING GUAN YU IN DOING SO. UNFORTUNATELY DIES TO A SUDDEN ILLNESS AFTER GUAN YU'S EXECUTION IN VOLUME 42, CAUSING SOME TO THINK HE WAS CURSED.

LU SU:
IMPORTANT MILITARY GENERAL AND ADVISOR OF WU.

LU XUN:
TALENTED WU OFFICIAL WHO QUICKLY RISES TO FAVOUR AFTER SUCCESSFULLY PLANNING THE CONQUEST OF JINGZHOU.

MA CHAO:
A FIERCE WARRIOR WHO SEEKS TO AVENGE HIS FATHER MA TENG'S DEATH AT CAO CAO'S HANDS. IN VOLUME 35, HE ENTERS LIU BEI'S SERVICE AND BECOMES ONE OF HIS MOST VALUABLE GENERALS.

MA DAI:
A NEPHEW OF MA CHAO WHO ENTERS LIU BEI'S SERVICE ALONGSIDE HIS UNCLE.

MA LIANG:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS. HE IS THE FOURTH YOUNGEST OF THE FIVE MA BROTHERS, AND IS NOTED FOR HIS INTELLECT AND WHITE EYEBROWS.

MA TENG:
GOVERNOR OF XILIANG AND FATHER OF MA CHAO, WHO SIGNED THE BLOOD-PLEDGE TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 30, HE IS EXECUTED FOR A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT OF CAO CAO.

MENG DA:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG WHO DEFECTS TO LIU BEI, ALONG WITH HIS GOOD FRIENDS ZHANG SONG AND FA ZHENG. HE LATER DEFECTS TO WEI IN VOLUME 43, AFTER REALIZING HE WOULD BE KILLED IN SHU TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR GUAN YU'S DEATH.

MI ZHU:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS.

PANG DE:
FIERCE GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED MA TENG AND THEN MA CHAO. IN VOLUME 36, HE DEFECTS TO CAO CAO'S SERVICE DUE TO A TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP WITH ZHANG LU, THE LORD OF HANZHONG. PERISHES IN THE BATTLE OF FANCHENG AGAINST GUAN YU IN VOLUME 41.

PANG TONG SHIYUAN:
NICKNAMED THE YOUNG PHOENIX (FENGCHU), HE IS A MASTERFUL STRATEGIST SAID TO BE ZHUGE LIANG'S EQUAL. AFTER ENTERING LIU BEI'S SERVICE, HE TRAGICALLY MET AN EARLY DEATH IN SHU WHEN AMBUSHED BY ZHANG REN IN VOLUME 34.

SHUI JING:
HIS REAL NAME IS SIMA HUI BUT HE IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS TAOIST NAME, SHUI JING (MEANING WATER MIRROR). HE IS THE TEACHER OF ZHUGE LIANG, PANG TONG, AND XU SHU.

SUN CE:
ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN, WHO TURNS THE SUN FAMILY'S FORTUNE AROUND WITH HIS CONQUEST OF THE SOUTH-LANDS. IN VOLUME 19, A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AND CONFLICT WITH YU JI CAUSES HIS BODY AND MENTAL HEALTH TO WEAKEN. HE SUCCUMBS TO DEATH SHORTLY AFTER.

SUN JIAN:
THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. HOWEVER, HIS ALLIES LIU BIAO AND YUAN SHAO TO TURN ON HIM WHEN HE TRIES TO KEEP THE IMPERIAL SEAL FOR HIMSELF. IN VOLUME 7, HE IS KILLED IN BATTLE AGAINST YUAN SHAO.

SUN QIAN:
TRUSTED ADVISOR TO LIU BEI. (HIS ROLE IS MUCH SMALLER IN SANGOKUSHI COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL NOVEL.)

SUN QUAN:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE AND THE CURRENT RULER OF WU, THE SOUTHLANDS OF CHINA.

TAISHI CI:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU YAO BUT DEFECTED TO SUN CE IN VOLUME 11. DURING THE BATTLE OF HEFEI (VOL. 29), HE FALLS PREY TO ZHANG LIAO'S PLAN AND IS KILLED IN BATTLE.

TAO QIAN:
THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY INVOKES CAO CAO'S WRATH WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLS CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG. UPON HIS DEATH, HE BEQUEATHS XUZHOU TO LIU BEI.

THE TEN ATTENDANTS:
A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY WERE KILLED DURING THE POWER STRUGGLE WITH HE JIN IN VOLUME 4.

WANG YUN:
THE MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN THE IMPERIAL COURT. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL USING DIAO CHAN IN VOLUME 8. HOWEVER, HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

WEI YAN:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT HAS DEFECTED TO LIU BEI ALONG WITH HUANG ZHONG IN VOLUME 28.

WEN CHOU:
HE AND YANG LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 18, HE IS AMBUSHED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY AND KILLED BY GUAN YU.

XIAHOU DUN:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. HE LOST HIS LEFT EYE DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S ARMY IN VOLUME 13.

XU CHU:
TRUSTED BODYGUARD OF CAO CAO. ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HE WAS RECRUITED BY CAO CAO WHO WAS IMPRESSED AFTER SEEING XU CHU'S DUEL WITH DIAN WEI.

XU SHU (SHAN FU):
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING. AFTER A BRIEF STINT OF SERVICE TO LIU BEI, HE IS TRICKED INTO COMING TO XUCHANG AND SERVING CAO CAO (VOLUME 21).

XUN YU:
TALENTED ADVISOR TO CA CAO.

XU HUANG:
CALM AND COLLECTED GENERAL UNDER SERVICE TO CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YAN LIANG:
HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 17, HE WAS KILLED BY GUAN YU WHILE FIGHTING CAO CAO'S ARMY AT BAIMA.

YAN YAN:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU ZHANG BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI AFTER HIS CAPTURE AT ZHANG FEI'S HANDS IN VOLUME 34. HE IS NOTED FOR HIS ENERGY DESPITE HIS OLD AGE.

YU JIN:
GENERAL SERVING CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YUAN SHAO:
OLDER BROTHER OF YUAN SHU AND THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU. AFTER MANY YEARS OF WARRING AGAINST CAO CAO FOR CONTROL OF NORTHERN CHINA, HE AND HIS FAMILY ARE DEFEATED.

YUAN SHU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE DECLARES HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY. IN VOLUME 15, HE DIES OF THIRST AFTER BEING ON THE RUN FROM LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S ARMIES.

ZHANG BAO:
ELDEST SON OF ZHANG FEI, WHO RISES TO PROMINENCE AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER.

ZHANG FEI YIDE:
A FIRECE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU. HIS TEMPER EVENTUALLY GETS THE BETTER OF HIM, WHEN HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS SUBORDINATES IN VOLUME 43.

ZHANG LIAO:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S TOP GENERALS. HE WAS FORMERLY LU BU'S SUBORDINATE BUT DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AFTER THE FORMER'S EXECUTION.

ZHANG LU:
THE LEADER OF THE CELESTIAL MASTERS TAOIST MOVEMENT, AND THE RULER OF HANZHONG. IN VOLUME 36, CAO CAO CONQUERS HANZHONG BUT SPARES ZHANG LU.

ZHANG REN:
ONE OF SHU'S MOST CAPABLE GENERALS WHO PLANNED THE AMBUSH THAT KILLED PANG TONG. HE REFUSED TO SERVE LIU BEI UNLIKE MANY OF HIS COMRADES AND WAS THUS EXECUTED WHEN FINALLY CAPTURED AT THE HANDS OF ZHUGE LIANG (VOLUME 35).

ZHANG SONG:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU ZHANG WHO, UPON FAILING TO MAKE AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN CAO CAO AND LIU ZHANG, SOUGHT LIU BEI'S SUPPORT AND SWITCHED HIS ALLEGIANCE. IN VOLUME 34, HE IS EXECUTED WHEN HIS BROTHER REPORTS HIS BETRAYAL TO LIU ZHANG.

ZHANG XIU:
LORD OF WANCHENG WHO ATTEMPTED TO KILL CAO CAO DURING THE BATTLE OF WANCHENG IN VOLUME 12. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AGAINST CAO CAO, HE FINALLY DECIDES TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO IN VOLUME 16.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:
A FORMER SUBJECT OF YUAN SHAO BUT LATER DEFECTED TO SERVE GONGSUN ZAN. AFTER GONGSUN ZAN'S DEATH, HE BECOMES ONE OF LIU BEI'S MOST TRUSTED GENERALS.

ZHOU TAI:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN.

ZHANG ZHAO:
ELDER STATESMAN AND SUN QUAN'S TRUSTED ADVISOR. HE ORIGINALLY ENTERED SUN CE'S SERVICE ALONG WITH ZHANG HONG, WITH WHOM HE WAS REFERRED TO AS THE "TWO ZHANGS."

ZHOU CANG:
FORMERLY A YELLOW TURBAN, HE MEETS GUAN YU IN VOLUME 18 AND BECOMES HIS SUBORDINATE. COMMITS SUICIDE AFTER LEARNING GUAN YU WAS EXECUTED IN VOLUME 42.

ZHOU YU GONGJIN:
SWORN BROTHER OF SUN CE, AND ONE OF WU'S TOP MINDS, SERVING AS THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DURING THE BATTLE OF THE RED CLIFFS. HE RECEIVES A CRITICAL ARROW-WOUND DURING HIS NANJUN CAMPAIGN (VOL. 27) WHICH HE NEVER FULLY RECOVERS FROM, LEADING TO HIS TRAGIC EARLY DEATH IN VOLUME 30.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING:
MASTERFUL STRATEGIST AND FORMER STUDENT OF SHUI JING. IN VOLUME 21, HE YIELDS TO LIU BEI'S PERSISTENCE AND DECIDES TO BECOME HIS SUBJECT.

SANGOKUSHI (ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS)

三国志

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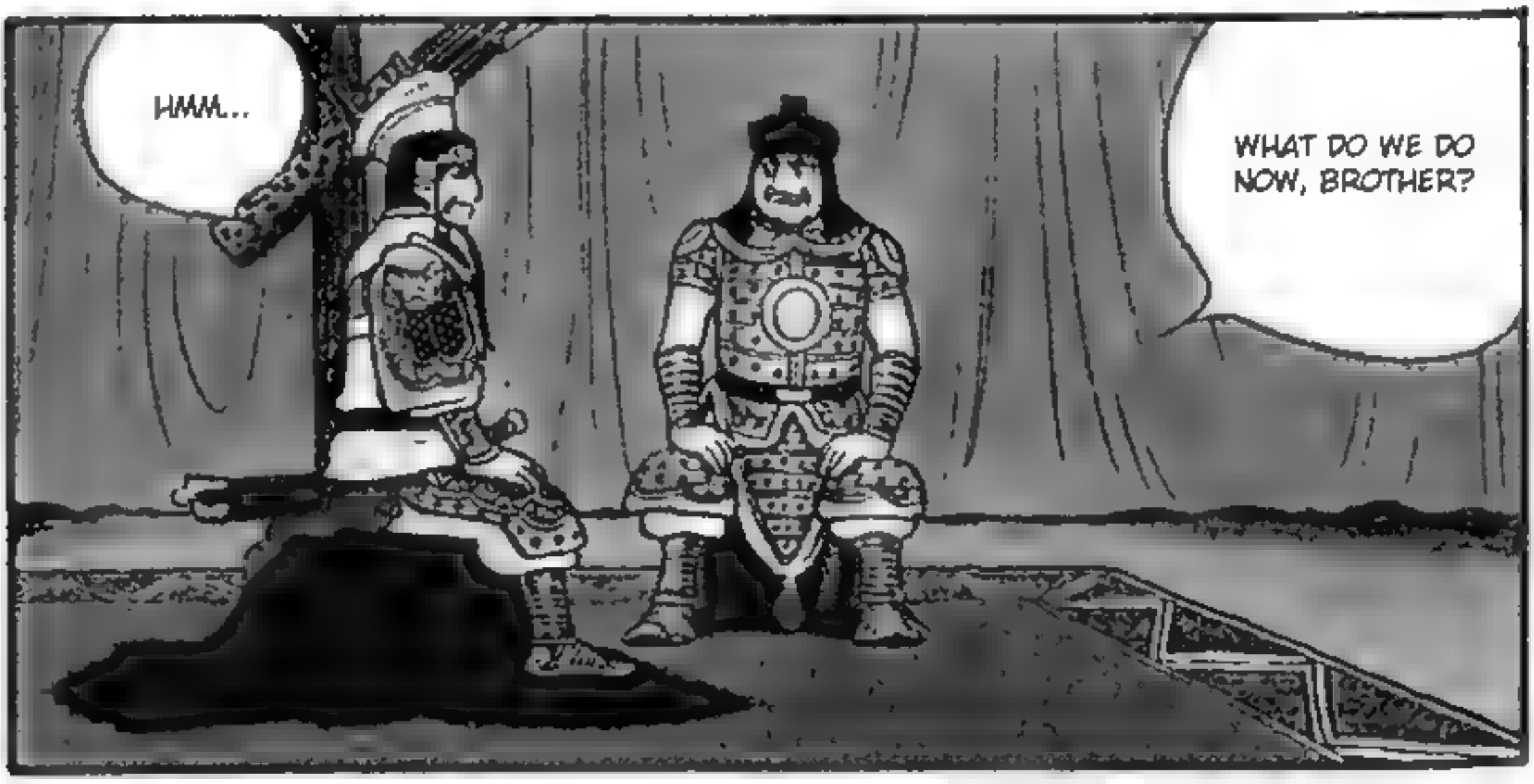
『月刊モーニング・ツー』掲載

TULONG RAVINE



BROTHER, DO YOU REALLY THINK WE CAN BEAT KONGMING? MIGHT IT NOT BE BETTER TO SUBMIT?

MANY OF THE RAVINE CHIEFS HAVE ALREADY SURRENDERED AFTER THEIR CAPTURE.

BUT YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN CAUGHT 4 TIMES. I HAVE TO SAY I DON'T HAVE MUCH CONFIDENCE IN US EVER BEATING HIM...

EVEN YOU HARBOUR SUCH WEAK-WILLED IDEAS NOW!?

WHAT!?

WHAT KIND OF RUSES?

SHUT UP! I WAS ONLY CAUGHT BECAUSE OF HIS STUPID LITTLE TRICKS! IF I REALLY WANTED TO, I COULD BEAT HIM BY COMING UP WITH MY OWN RUSES!

WELL, IF IT'S A CLEVER STRATEGIST WE NEED, I SUPPOSE THERE IS KING DUO SI, THE CHIEF OF TULONG RAVINE.

THAT'S... EXACTLY WHAT I'M TRYING TO THINK ABOUT NOW, IF YOU'D LET ME!

OF COURSE! WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF HIM BEFORE!?
GOT IT.
GO TO TULONG RAVINE AND ASK IF HE'LL LEND US ASSISTANCE.

MENG YOU QUICKLY RODE TO ENLIST DUO SI'S HELP.

TU LONG RAVINE WAS A ROCKY RAVINE LOCATED SEVERAL HUNDRED LI SOUTH FROM THE WESTER RIVER

YES, THAT KONGMING IS NO ORDINARY MAN.

AH, KING MENG HUO IS IN THAT MUCH TROUBLE?

HAHAHA! OF COURSE, OF COURSE! I WILL GLADLY OFFER MY HELP!

WE ARE OLD FRIENDS, ARE WE NOT? WILL YOU HELP MY BROTHER AND I?

HERE?

BUT TELL MENG HUO THAT WE MUST WAGE WAR ON MY LANDS.

ALRIGHT THEN.

YES, HOSTILE INVADERS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ENTER AND LEAVE WITH THEIR LIVES INTACT. YOU HAVE MY WORD ON THAT.

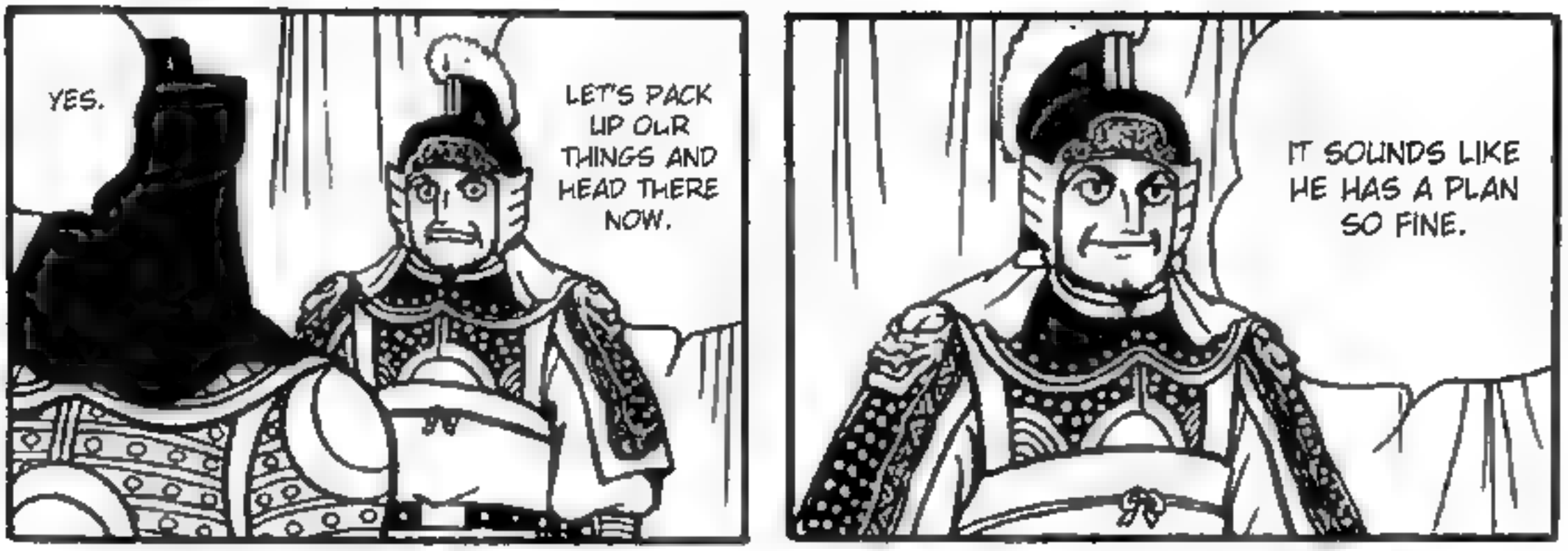
JOYED. MENG YOU RETURNED BACK TO HIS BROTHER

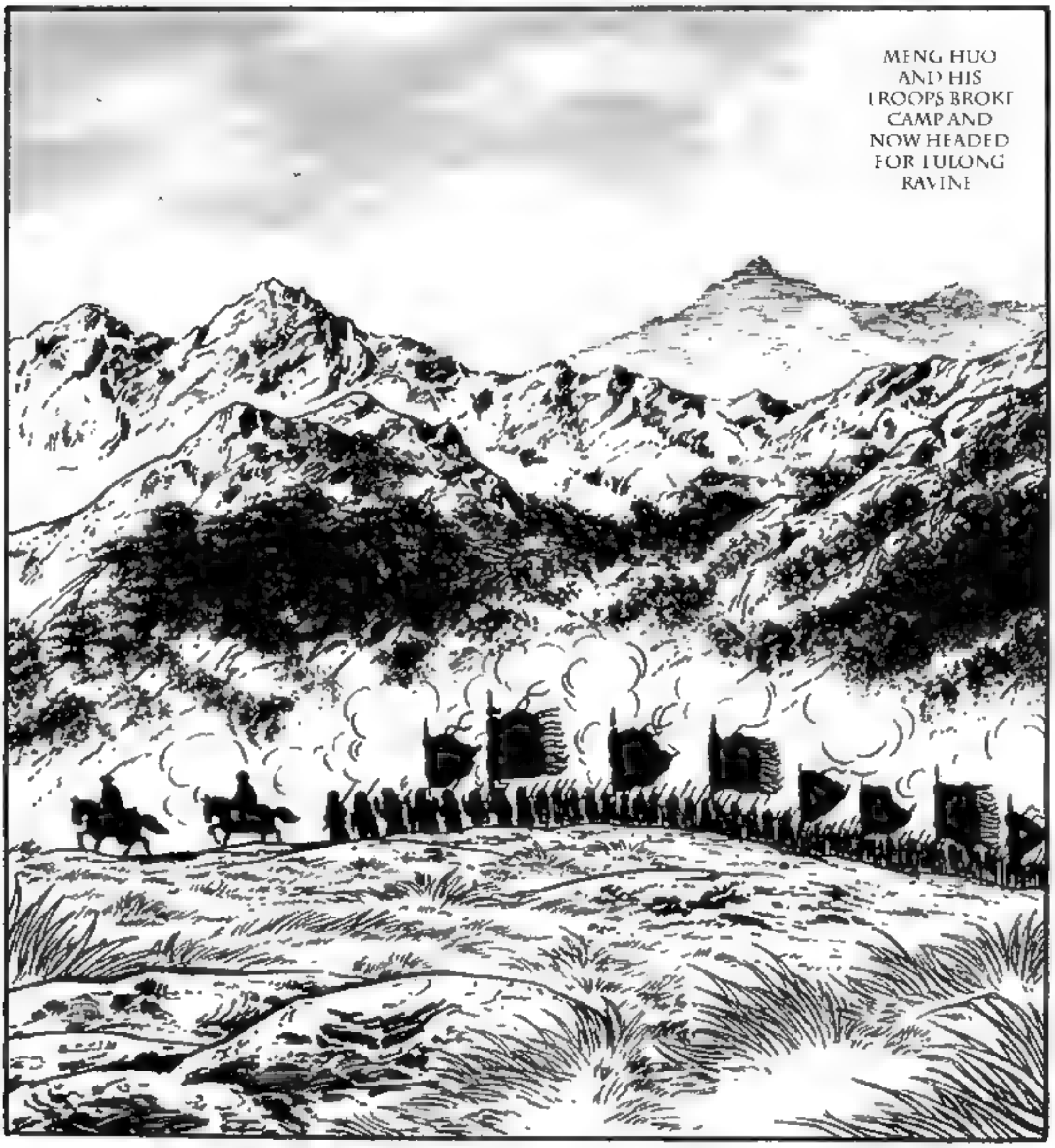
YES, BUT HE SAYS WE MUST FIRST COME TO TULONG RAVINE AND FIGHT ON ITS LANDS IN ORDER TO WIN.

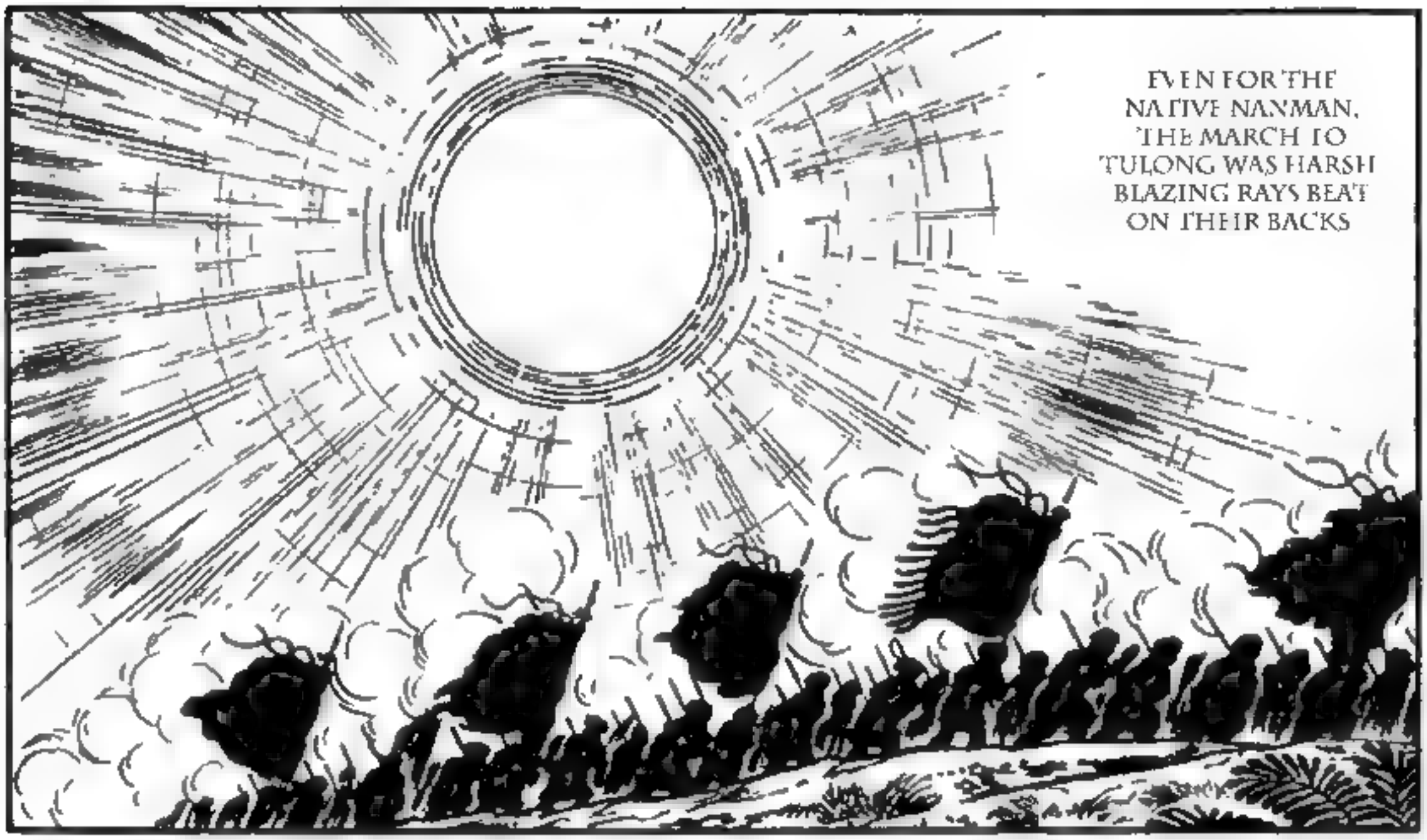
DUO SI AGREED TO HELP US?

YES, DUO SI WAS QUITE CONFIDENT HE COULD DEFEAT ANY FOE INVADING HIS LANDS.

FIGHT IN TULONG RAVINE?


YES.
LET'S PACK UP OUR THINGS AND HEAD THERE NOW.
IT SOUNDS LIKE HE HAS A PLAN SO FINE.


MENG HUO AND HIS TROOPS BROKE CAMP AND NOW HEADED FOR TULONG RAVINE

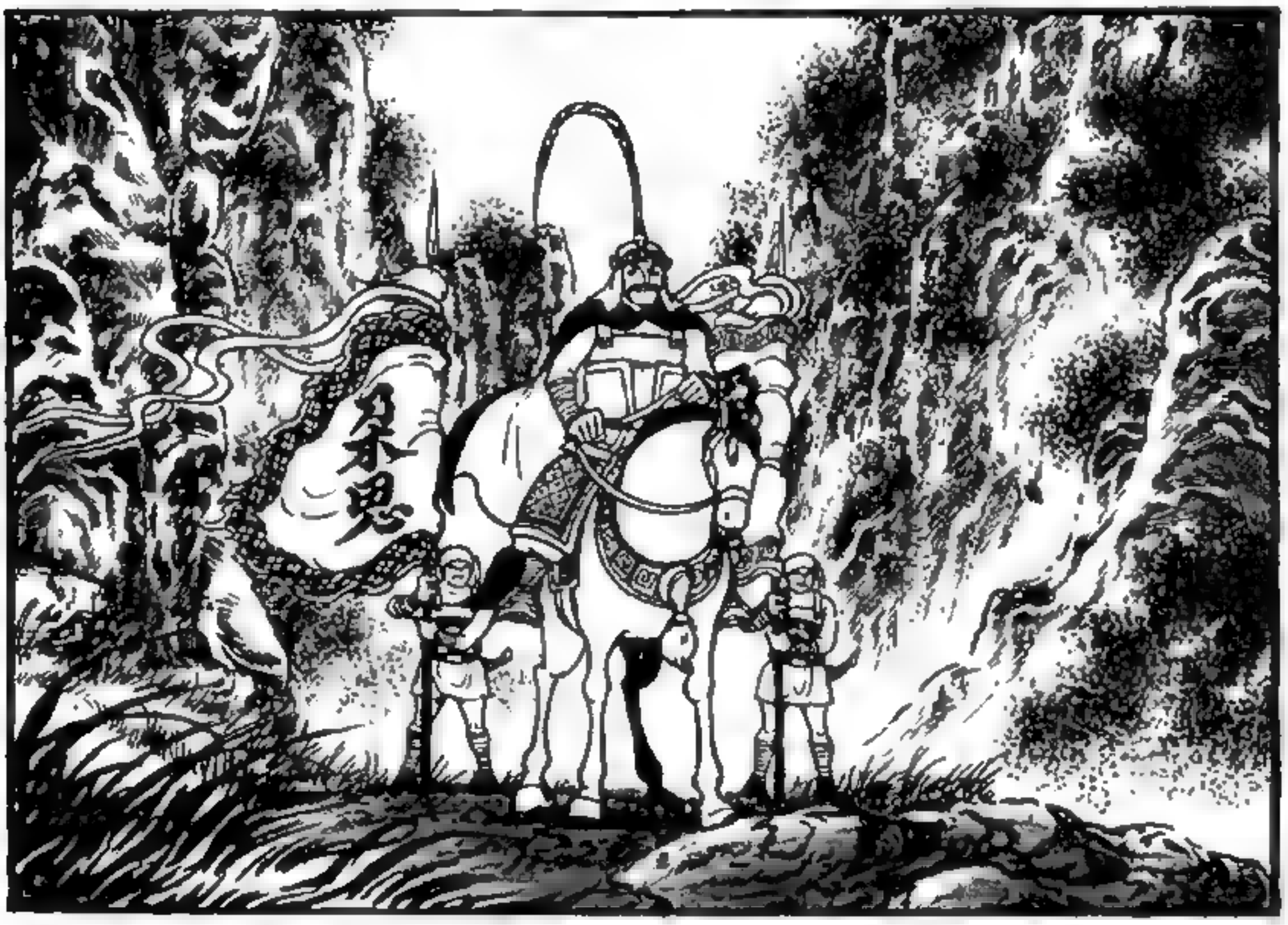

EVEN FOR THE
NATIVE NANMAN,
THE MARCH TO
TULONG WAS HARSH
BLAZING RAYS BEAT
ON THEIR BACKS

AND ROUGH
TERRAIN
SLOWED THEIR
ADVANCE

HM?

PANT
PANT

HM?


ズズズ

I'VE COME TO ESCORT YOU.

KING DUO SI!

HAHA, IT IS ONLY NATURAL FOR US TO BAND TOGETHER AND FIGHT OFF HOSTILE FOREIGNERS.

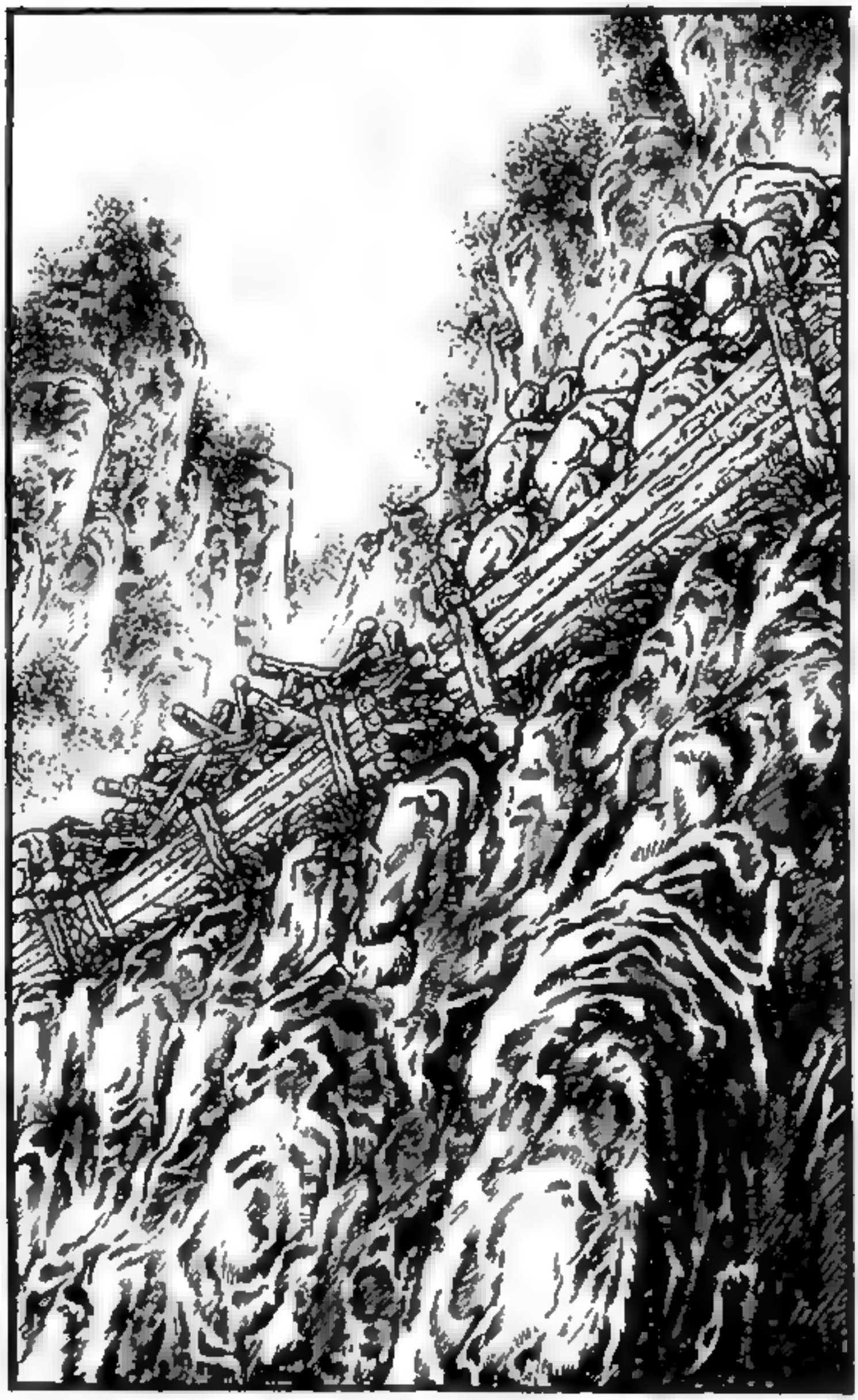
THANK YOU. I AM TRULY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR HELP IN THIS WAR.

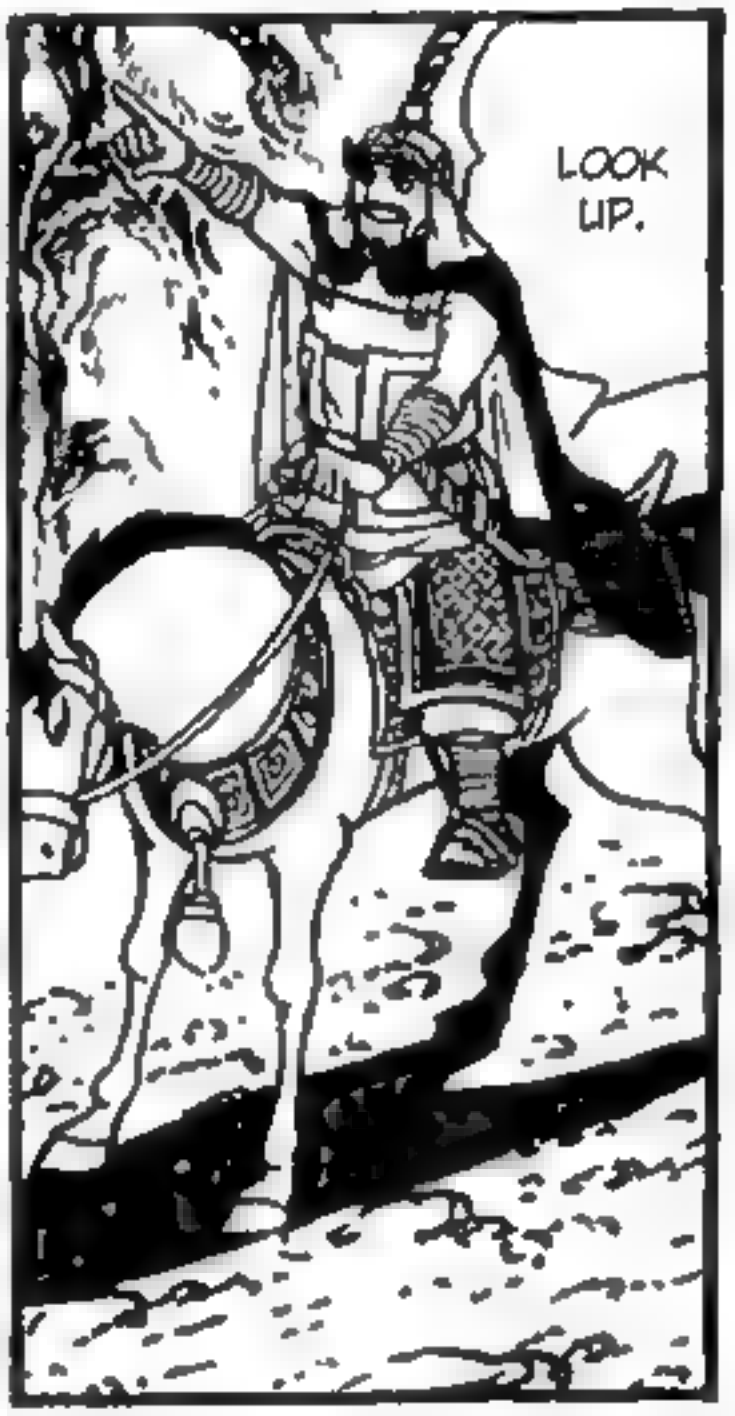
ONCE THE ENEMIES COME TO THIS RAVINE, THEY WILL NOT LEAVE ALIVE.

EXACTLY. UNITED WE STAND, AS THEY SAY.

YES, SINCE THIS IS THE ONLY SAFE PATH TO TULONG.

BLOCK IT?
NOW I MUST ASK YOU AND YOUR MEN TO HURRY THROUGH THIS PATH, FOR I AM ABOUT TO BLOCK IT OFF.




LOOK UP.

!

OF COURSE.

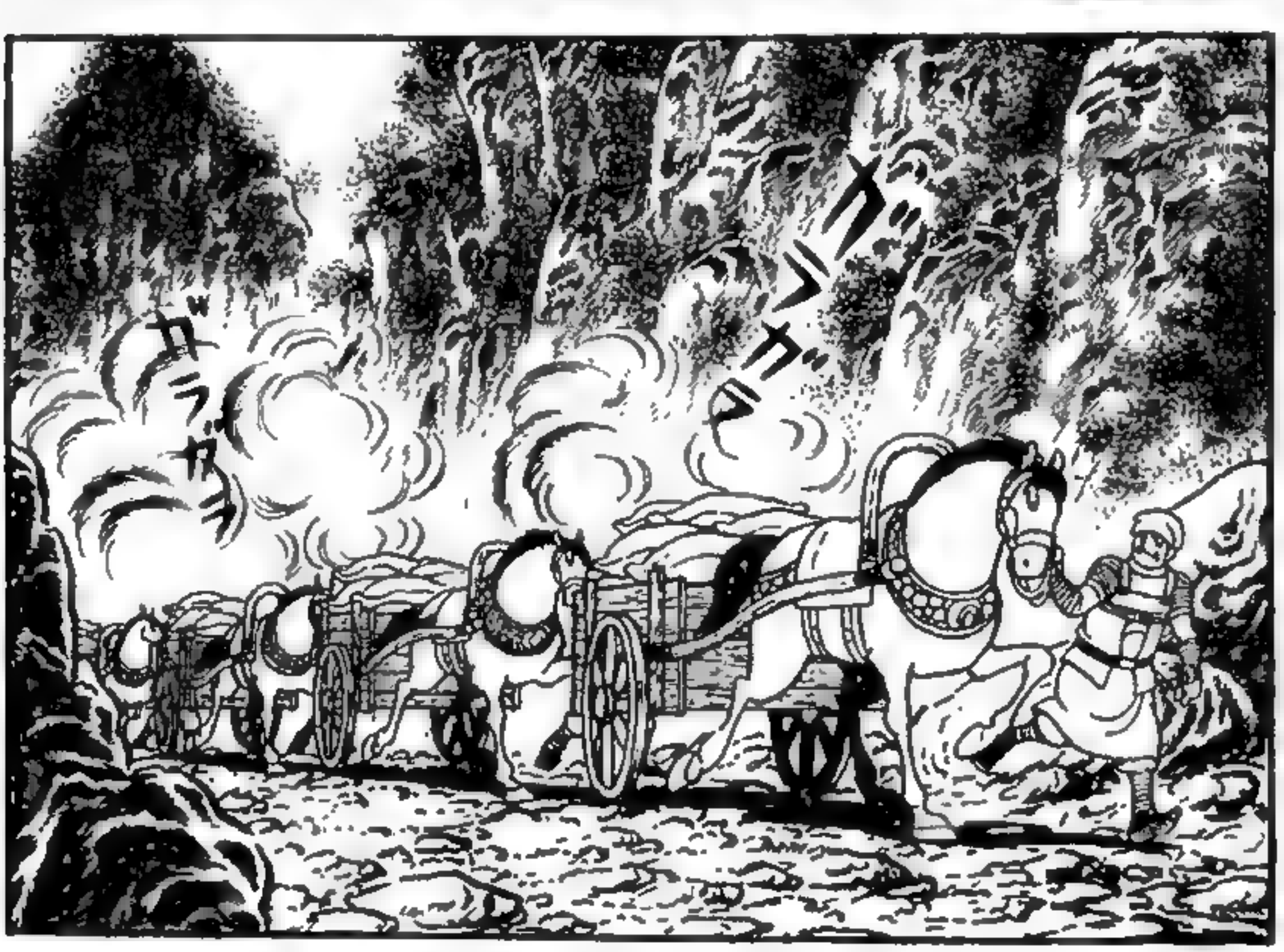
I SEE, SO YOU'VE ALREADY MADE PLANS.

THE LOGS AND BOULDERS WILL BE USED TO CLOSE OFF THIS PATH TO ALL OUTSIDERS.

RIGHT.

MENG YOU, LET'S LEAD THE MEN QUICKLY THROUGH TH'S PATH.

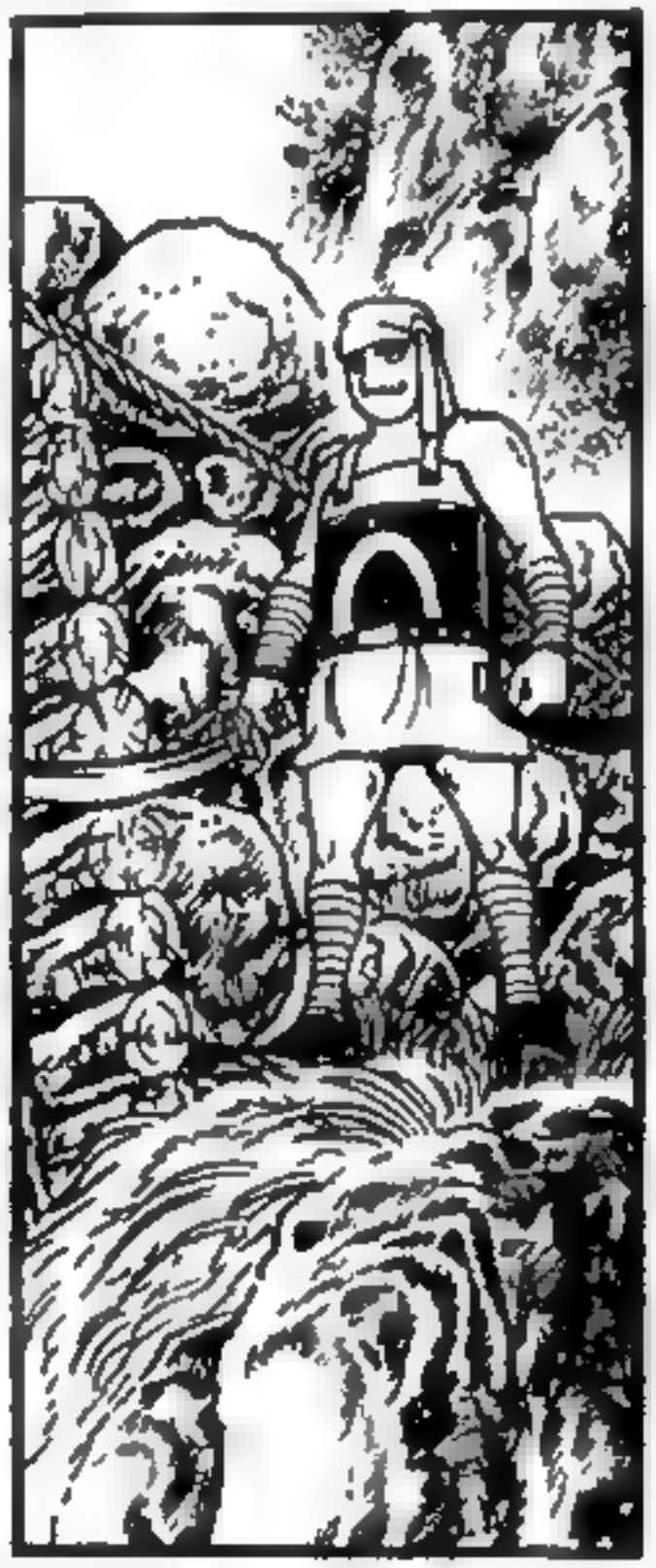
HASTEN YOUR PACE, UNLESS YOU WISH TO BE CRUSHED UNDER FALLING BOULDERS AND LOGS!

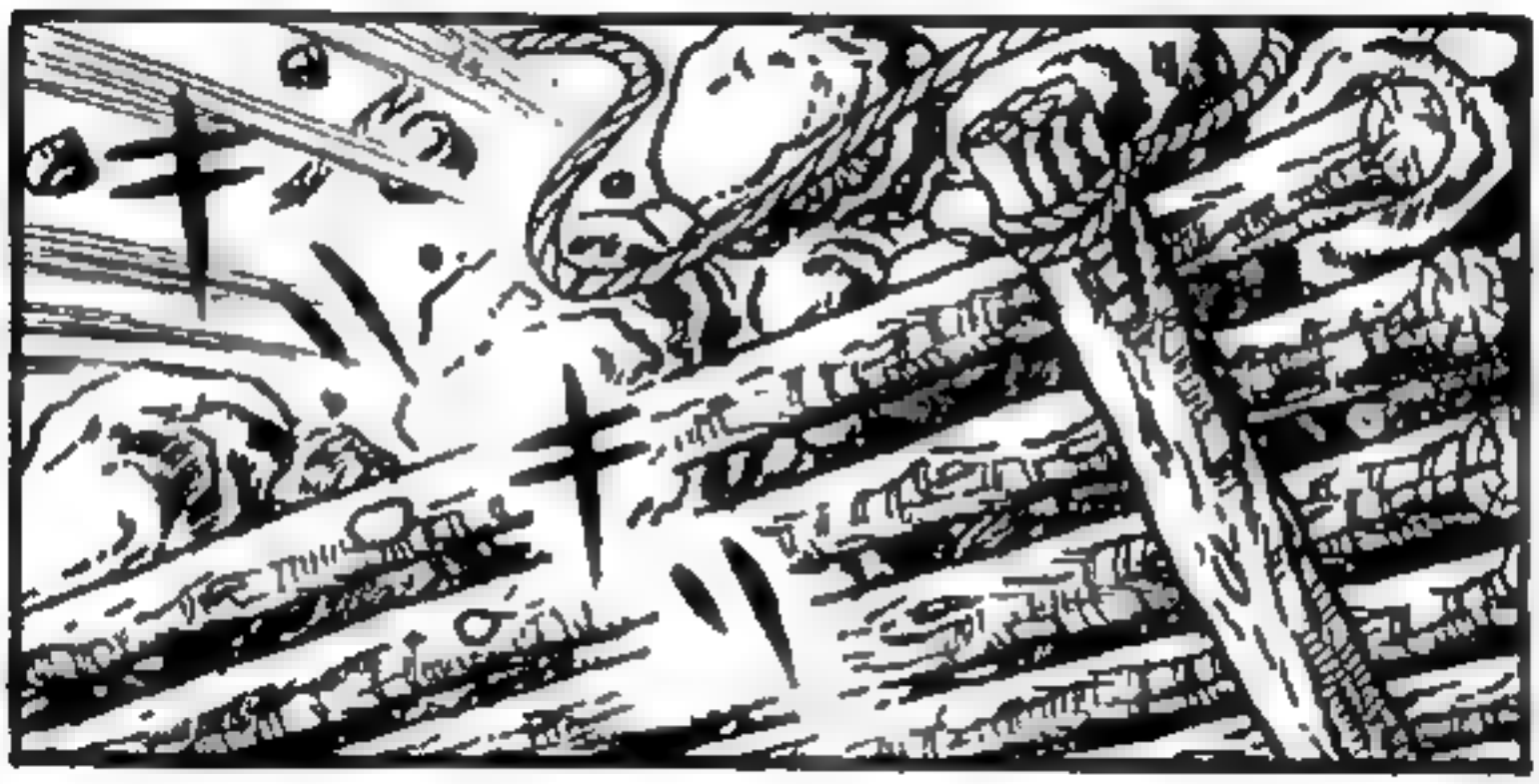


GOOD.

THEY'RE ALL THROUGH.

NOW!





SURE.

WITH THAT, OUR VICTORY IS ALREADY GUARANTEED. I WILL EXPLAIN WHY ONCE WE REACH MY CASTLE.

THE SHU ARMY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO USE THIS PATH ANYMORE.

I'LL DRINK, BUT I WANT TO HEAR WHY YOU THINK OUR VICTORY IS NOW GUARANTEED AFTER SHUTTING OFF THAT ROAD.

A TOAST TO VICTORY, KING MENG HUO! TONIGHT, YOU CAN DRINK WITHOUT RESTRAINT AND WORRY!

THERE ARE TWO PATHS THAT LEAD IN AND OUT OF TULONG RAVINE...

OH YES, ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN.

THE OTHER PATH, HOWEVER, IS FRAUGHT WITH HARSH TERRAIN, THICK JUNGLES, AND DEADLY VIPERS.

YES, THE ONE YOU CAME THROUGH WAS THE SAFE ONE.

...

THERE'S ANOTHER PATH?

?

AND EVEN IF ONE WERE TO GET PAST ALL THAT, THERE ARE EVEN DEADLIER DANGERS WAITING AHEAD.

EVEN US LOCALS DO NOT KNOW THE EXACT REASON WHY... NONTHELESS, OUTSIDE OF THAT SPECIFIC PERIOD OF TIME...

AND WHY IS THAT?

THERE IS A POINT IN THE PATH WHICH CAN ONLY BE CROSSED WHEN IT IS NEAR SUNSET.

...

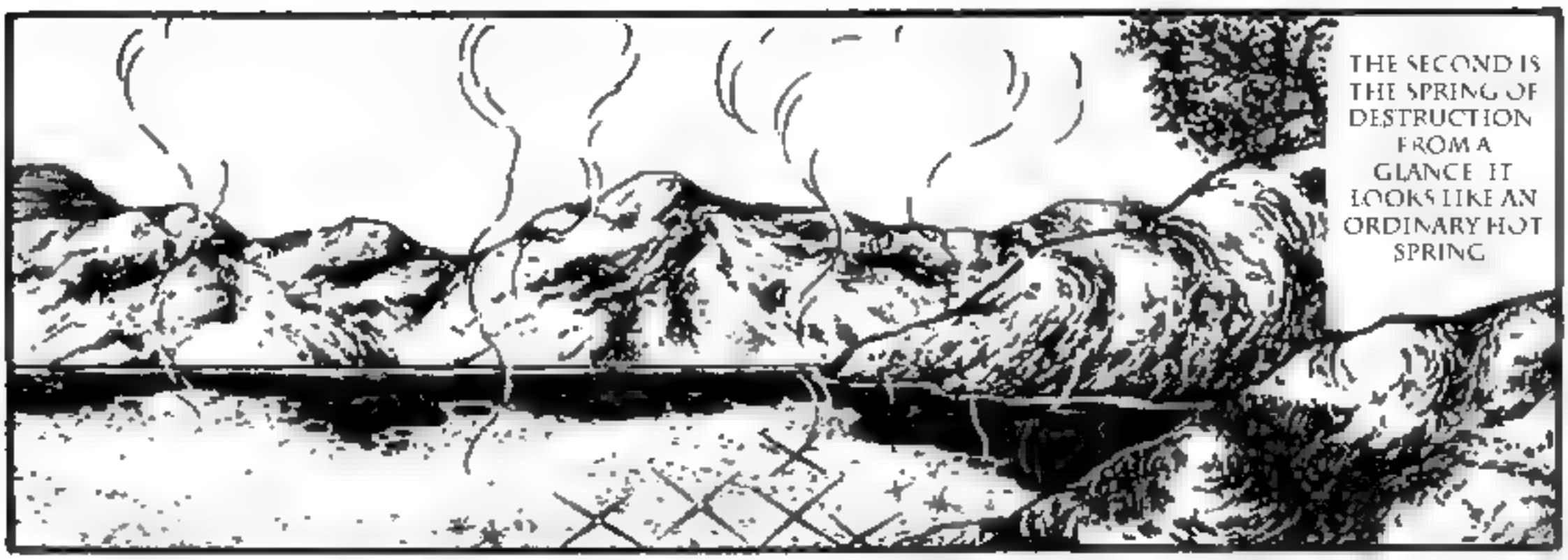
TOXIC FUMES AND SMOKE RISES UP FROM THE RUMBLING GROUND, WHICH ALSO SPEWS NOXIOUS SULFUR. NO ANIMALS DARE TO APPROACH THIS PLACE

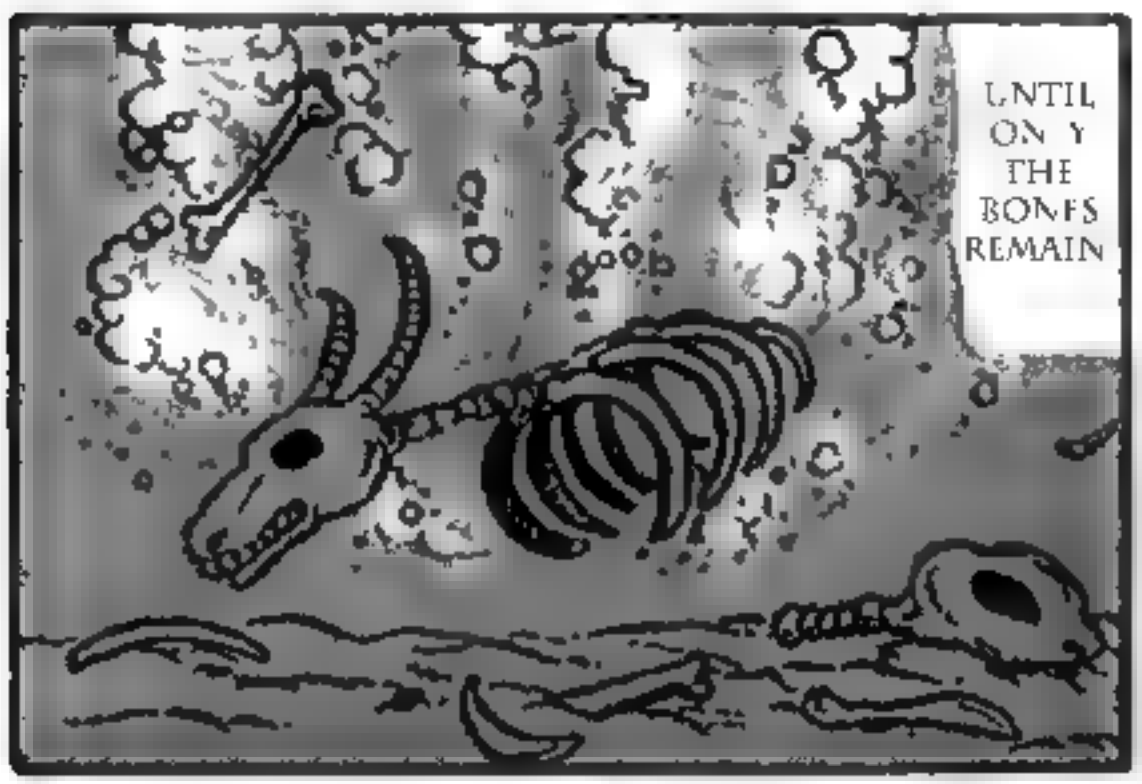
THAT IS NOT ALL. AFTER THAT PLACE COMES FOUR DEADLY SPRINGS.

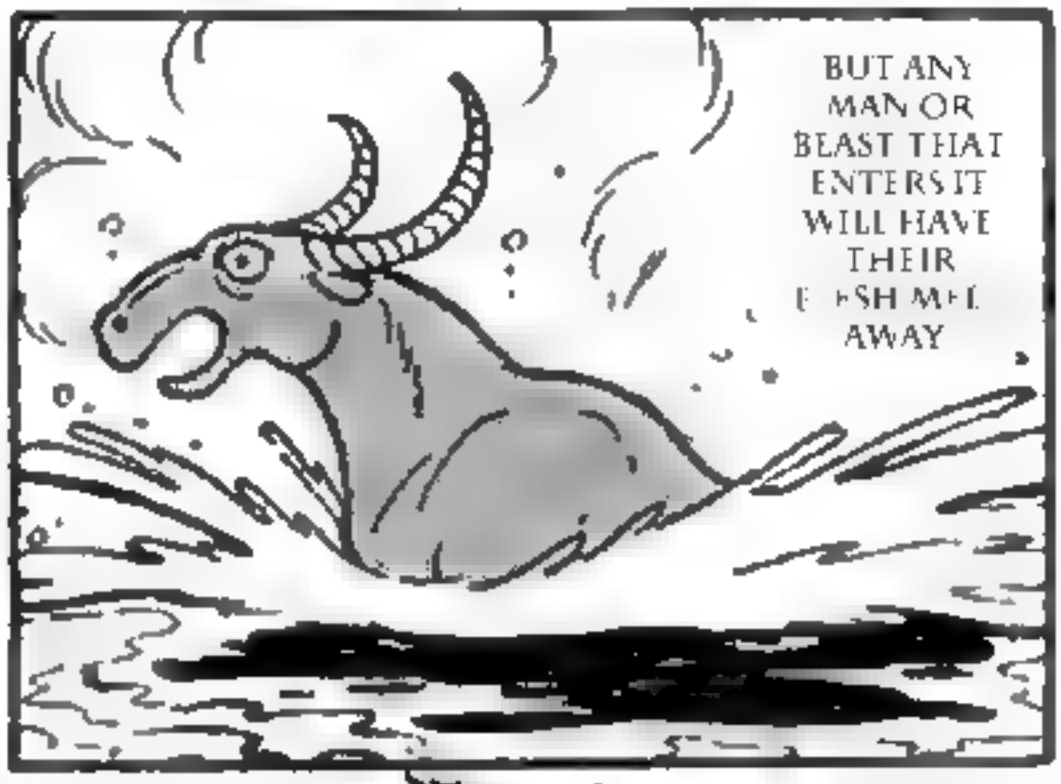
I HAD NO IDEA SUCH A DANGEROUS PLACE EXISTED...

AND WHAT OF THE OTHER 3?

THE FIRST ONE IS CALLED THE MUTE SPRING, FOR ANY MAN WHO DRINKS FROM IT WILL BECOME MUTE IN A DAY, AND DIE BY THE 5TH DAY.


THE SECOND IS THE SPRING OF DESTRUCTION FROM A GLANCE IT LOOKS LIKE AN ORDINARY HOT SPRING

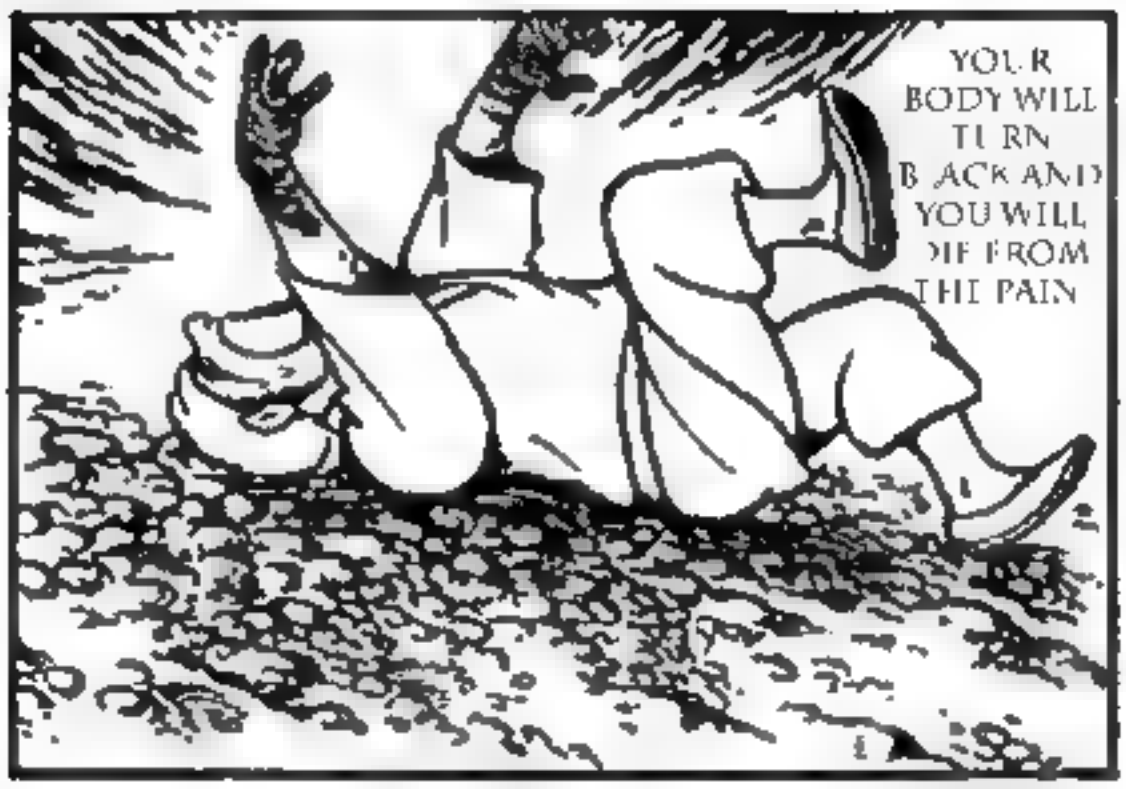

UNTIL ONLY THE BONES REMAIN

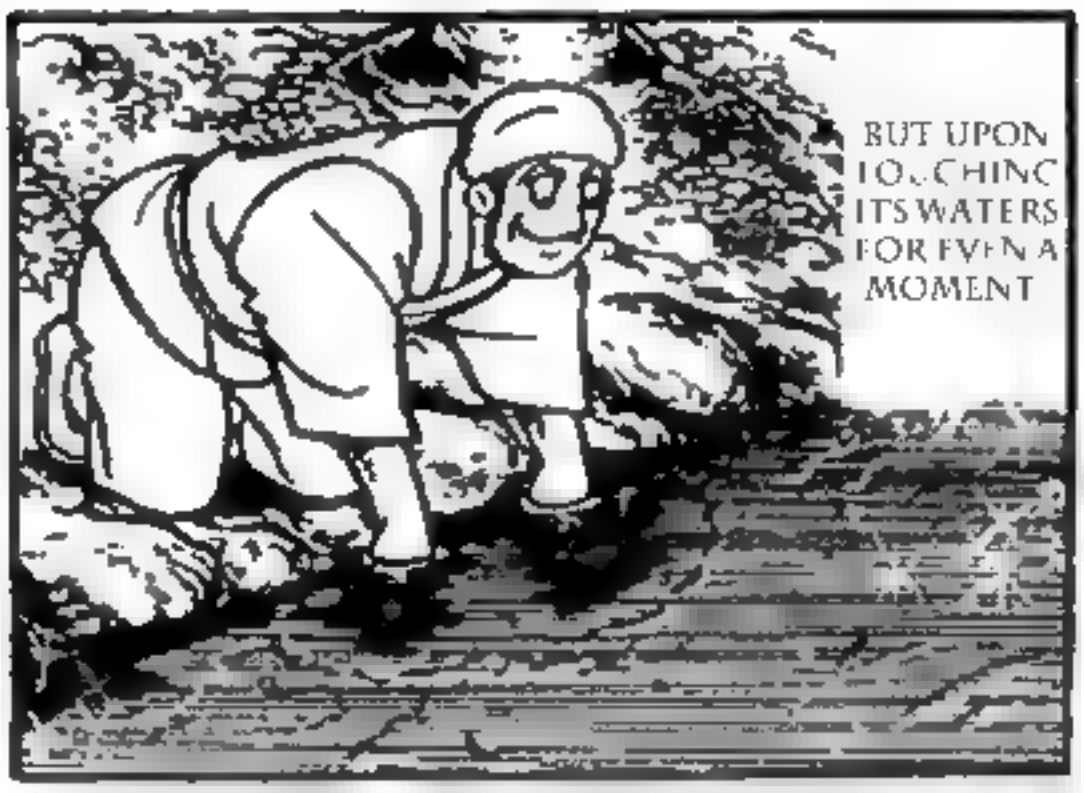

BUT ANY MAN OR BEAST THAT ENTERS IT WILL HAVE THEIR FLESH MELT AWAY

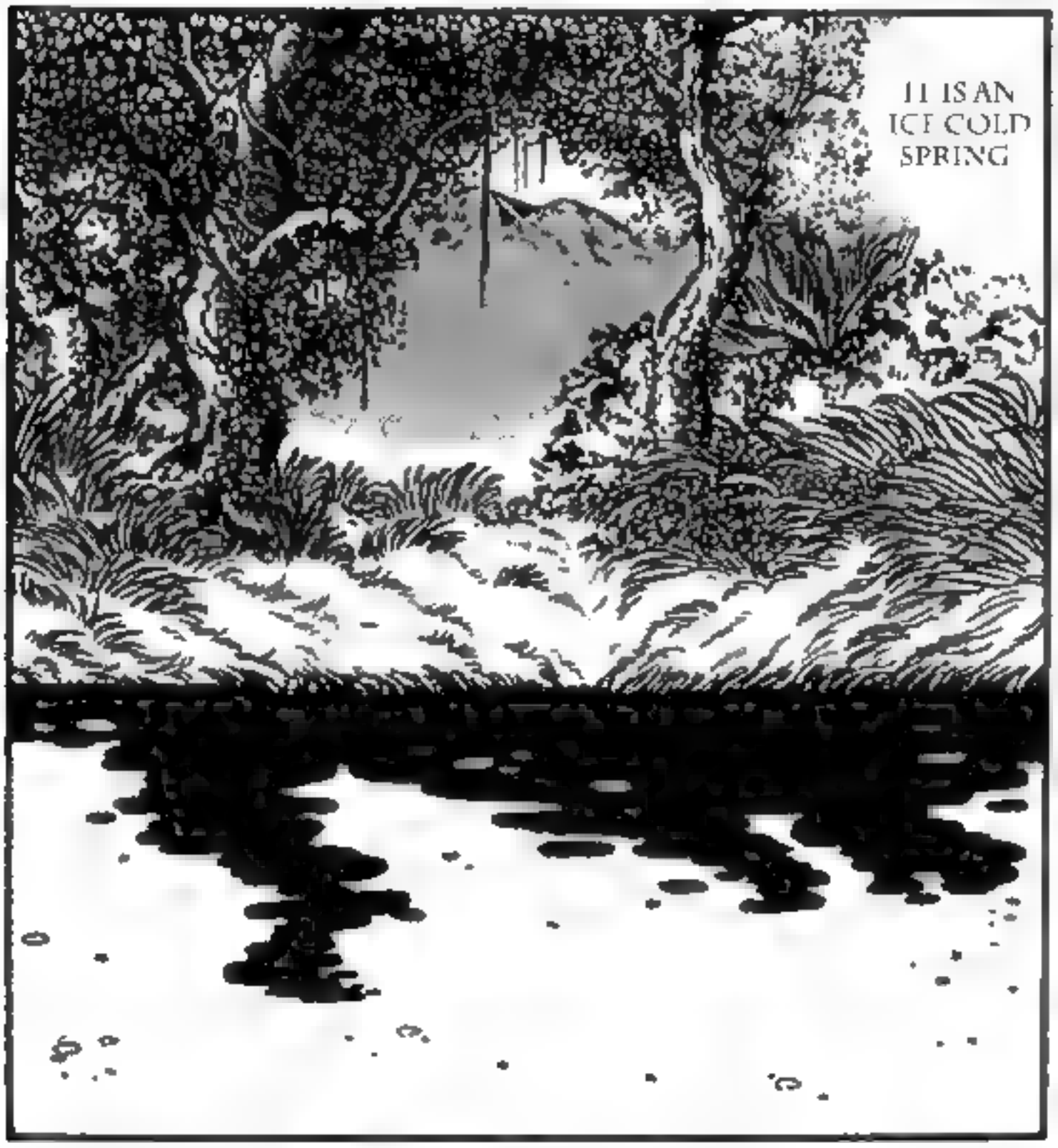
THE BLACK SPRING.

AND THE 3RD SPRING?

ITS WATERS LOOK CALM AND PRISTINE


YOUR
BODY WILL
TURN
BACK AND
YOU WILL
DIE FROM
THE PAIN

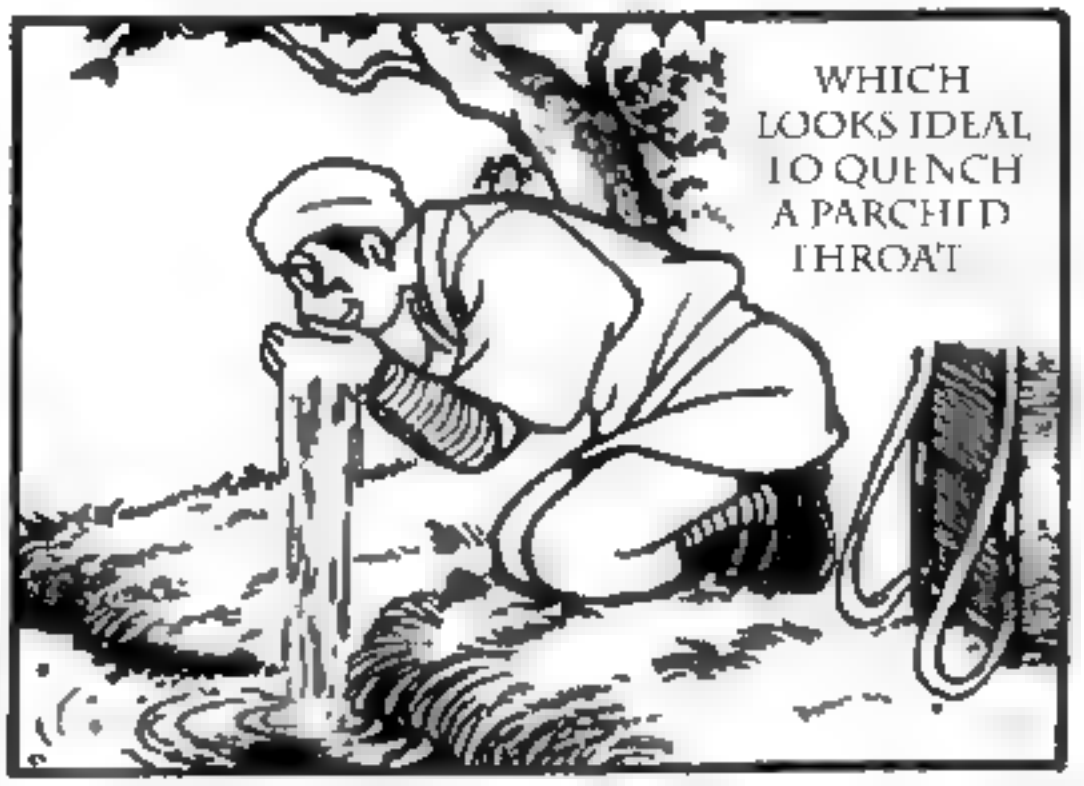

BUT UPON
TOUCHING
ITS WATERS
FOR EVEN A
MOMENT


IT IS AN
ICE COLD
SPRING

AND THE
4TH
SPRING?

THE SOFT
SPRING.

BUT NONE
HAVE
SURVIVED
AFTER
DRINKING
IT


WHICH
LOOKS IDEAL
TO QUENCH
A PARCHED
THROAT

EXACTLY. ALL WE NEED TO DO IS WAIT HERE FOR THEM TO DESTROY THEM-SELVES.

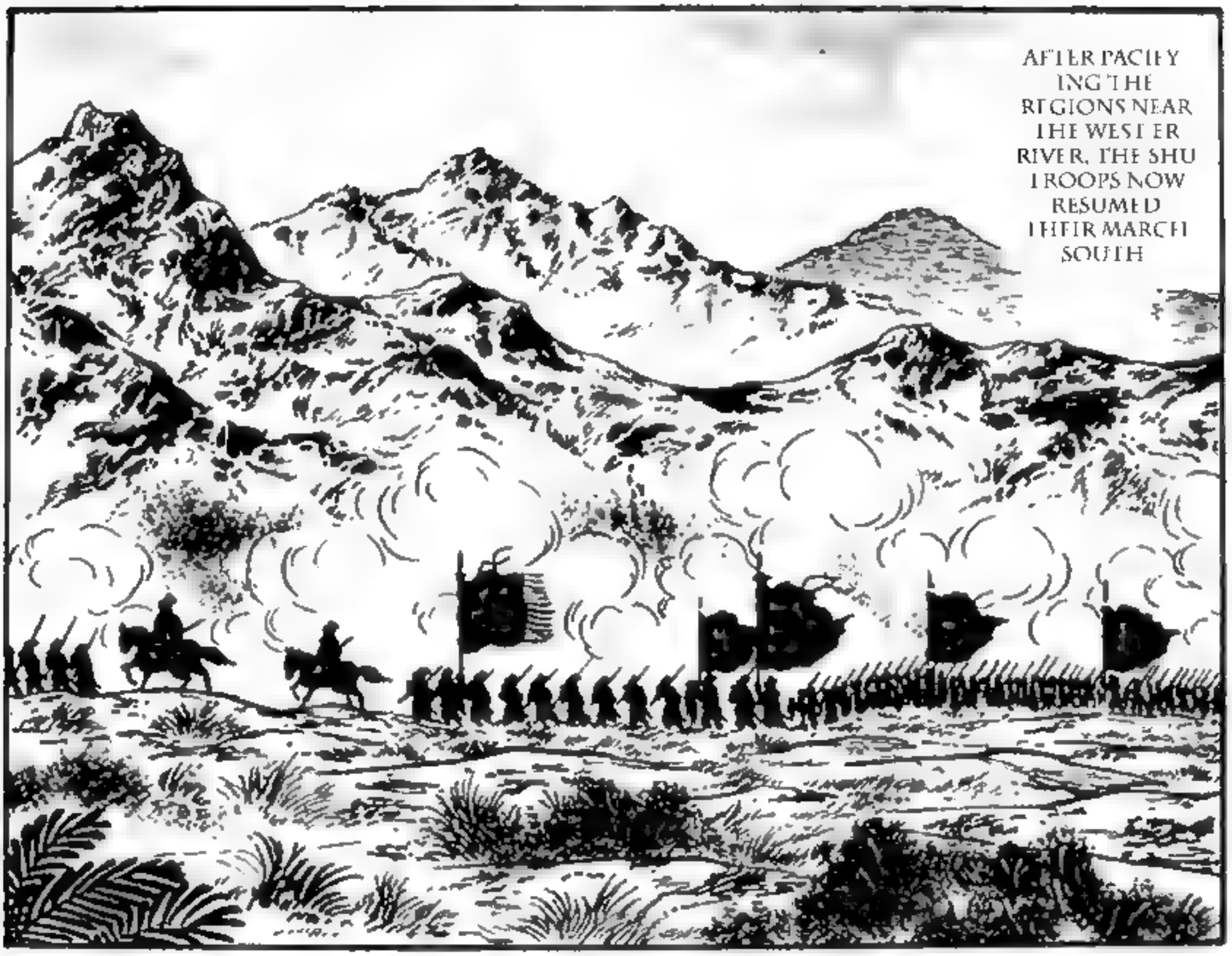
WITH SO MANY DANGERS, EVEN KONGMING WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE IT THROUGH.

COME HERE, IF YOU DARE, KONGMING!

HAHAHAHA! HOW AMUSING!

HAHAHA! YES, LET US DRINK WHILE WE AWAIT THE ENEMY ARMY'S INEVITABLE DESTRUCTION!
A TOAST TO OUR CERTAIN VICTORY! LET US DRINK THE NIGHT AWAY!

TOXIC SPRINGS



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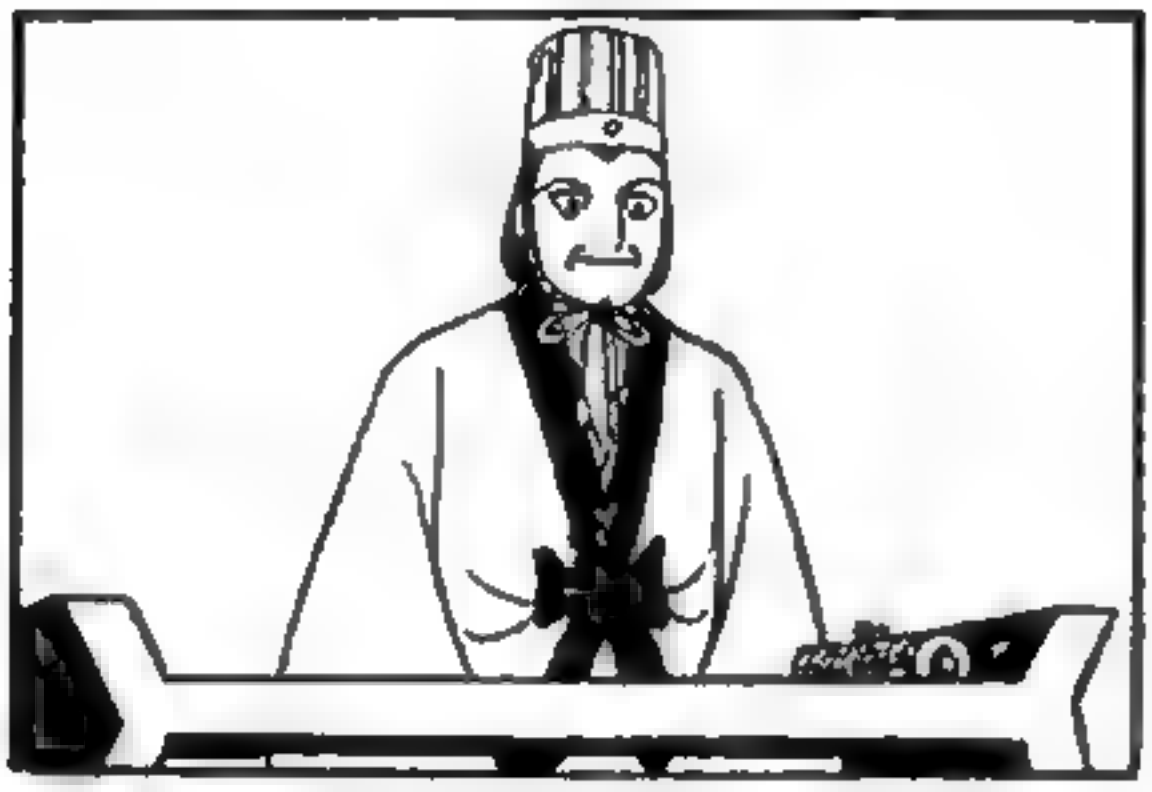
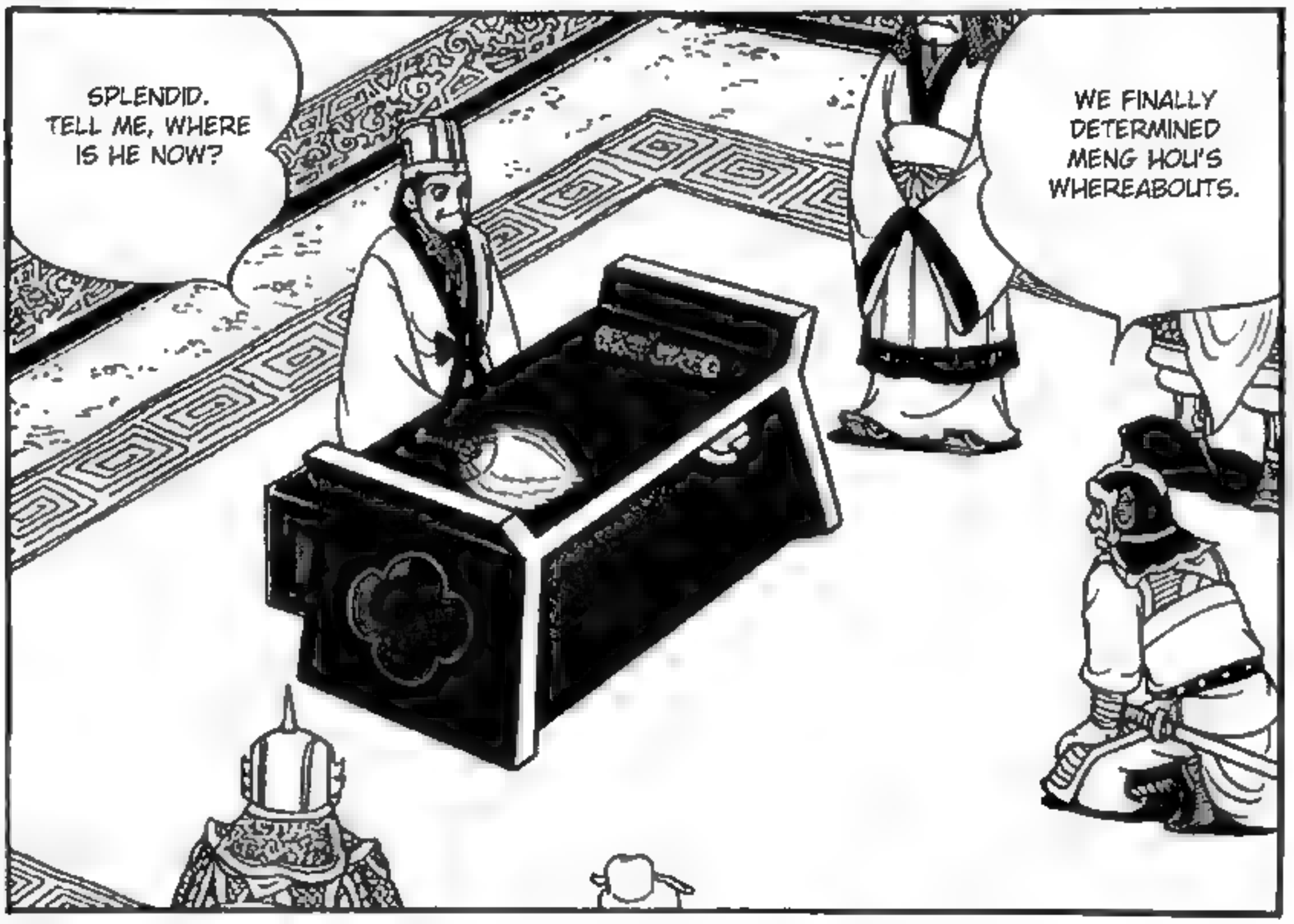


REPORTING, SIR!


SPLENDID. TELL ME, WHERE IS HE NOW?
WE FINALLY DETERMINED MENG HOU'S WHEREABOUTS.

TULONG?

HE HAS WITHDRAWN DEEPER SOUTH TO TULONG RAVINE.

LU KAI, I CAN'T SEEM TO FIND TULONG RAVINE ON YOUR MAP.

HMM...

SO EVEN YOU DON'T KNOW OF IT...

I MUST ADMIT EVEN I HAVE NEVER HEARD OF IT BEFORE. IT MUST SURELY BE AN EXTREMELY REMOTE PLACE, TO WHICH ACCESS WILL BE DIFFICULT.

SIR.

PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BEST TO WITHDRAW BACK TO SHU. SURELY WE'VE SHOWN THESE BARBARIANS NOT TO STIR UP TROUBLE FOR US BY NOW.

YES, SIR.

WANG PING, YOU ARE TO LEAD THE VANGUARD AND SCOUT OUT A WAY INTO TULONG RAVINE.

DON'T YOU REALIZE THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT MENG HUO IS AIMING FOR, NOT TO MENTION HE IS STILL HOSTILE TO US AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE A THORN FOR OUR EMPIRE.

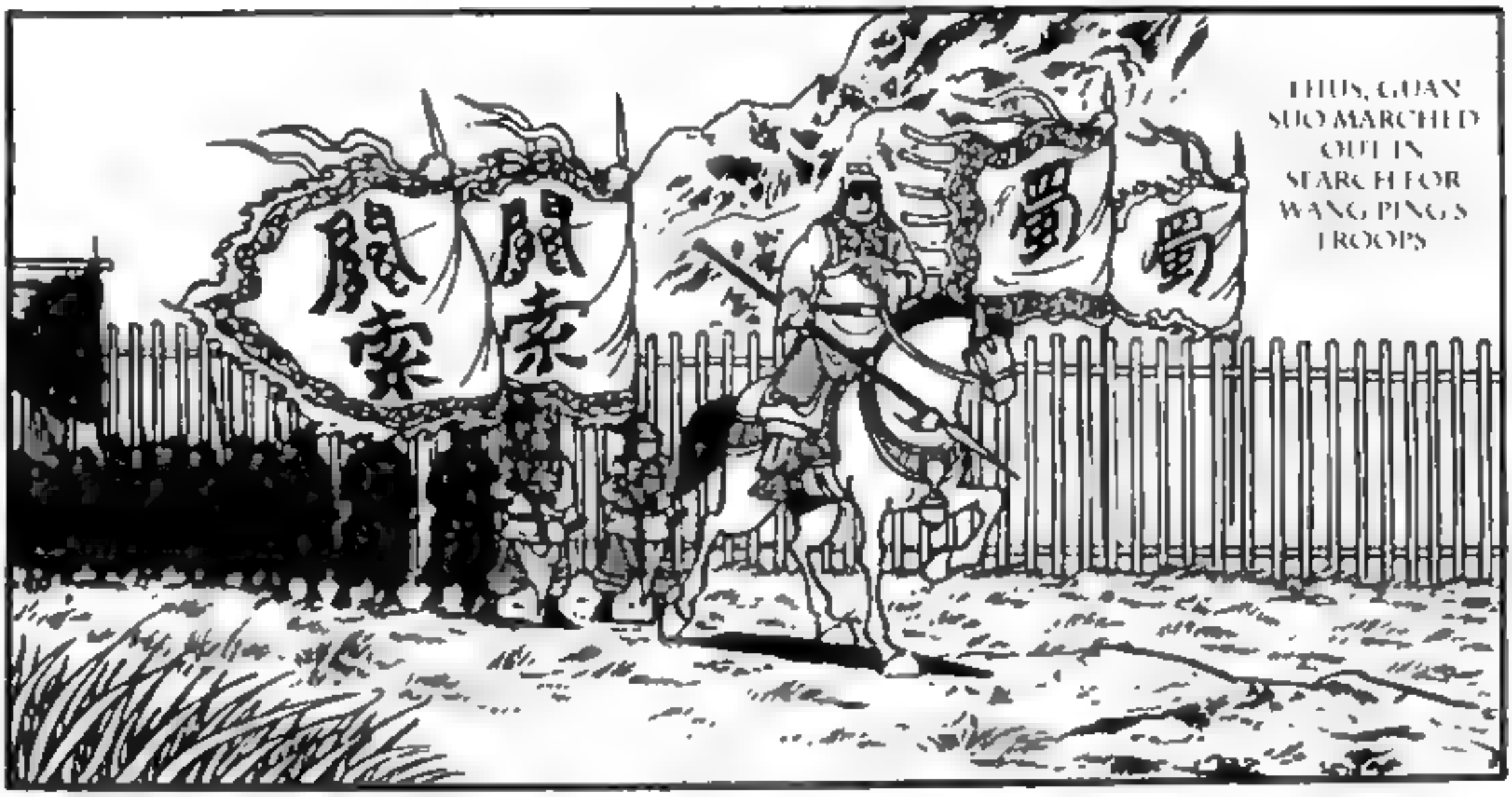
WANG PING NOW HEADED INTO THE JUNGLES WITH LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT TO EXPECT

YES?

GUAN SUO.

YES, SIR.

IT'S ALREADY BEEN A WEEK SINCE WANG PING'S DEPARTURE BUT I'VE YET TO HEAR BACK FROM HIM. I WANT YOU TO TAKE 1000 TROOPS AND DETERMINE HIS SITUATION.


蜀
蜀
THUS, GUAN SUO MARCHED OUT IN SEARCH FOR WANG PING'S TROOPS

THEY WOULD SOON REALIZE THIS WOULD BE NO ORDINARY SEARCH MISSION

HM?

SIR, I THINK THESE ARE WANG PING'S TROOPS

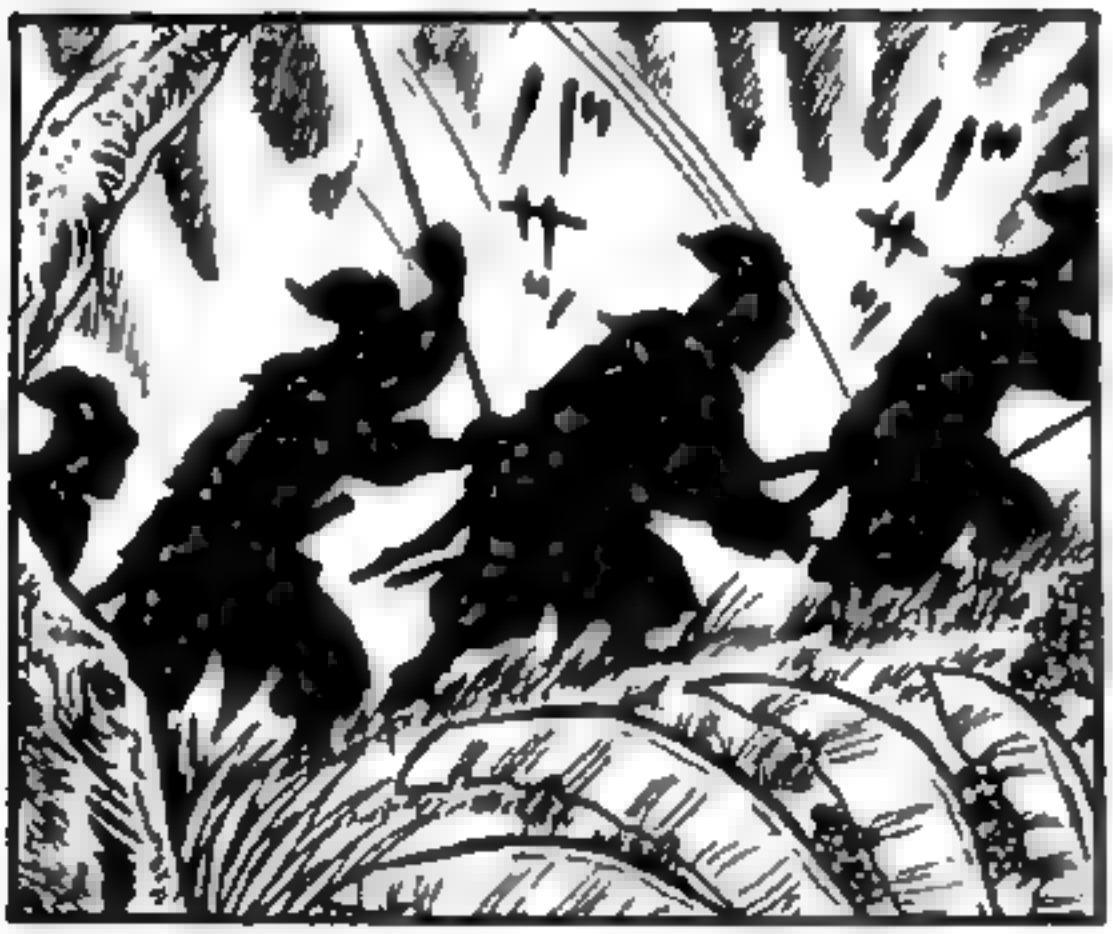
GO SEE WHAT THEY DIED FROM.

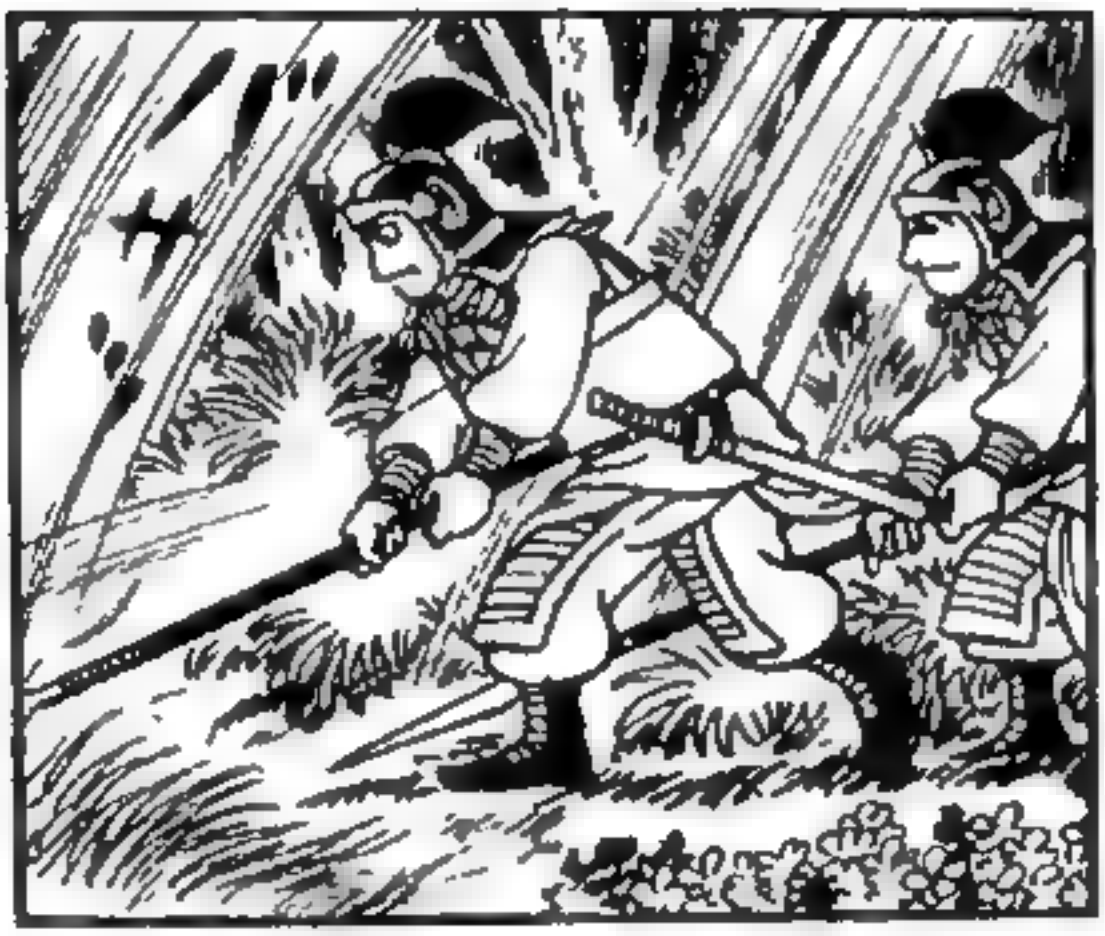
THERE ARE VIPER BITE MARKS ON THEIR BODIES, SIR.

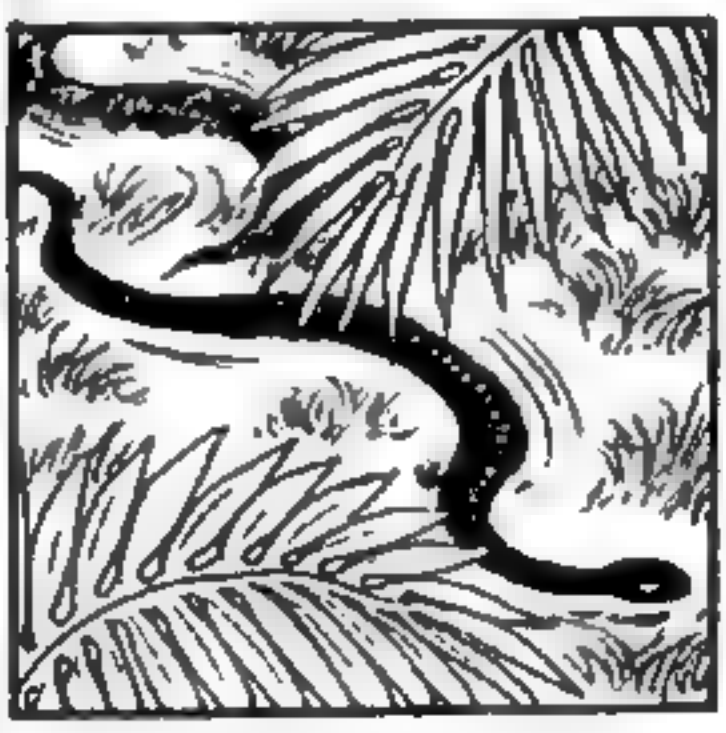
OVER THERE, SIR!

THIS MUST BE A VIPER'S DEN. EVERYONE, STAY ON YOUR GUARDS. BEAT THE GROUND WITH YOUR SPEARS TO SCARE ANY VIPERS AWAY.

AGHH...







HM?

ALL THE TREES HERE HAVE WITHERED AAWAY...

HM!?

YES...

THERE'S A WEIRD RUMBLING SOUND COMING FROM THE GROUND, SIR.

WE'LL GO CHECK THE BODIES, SIR.

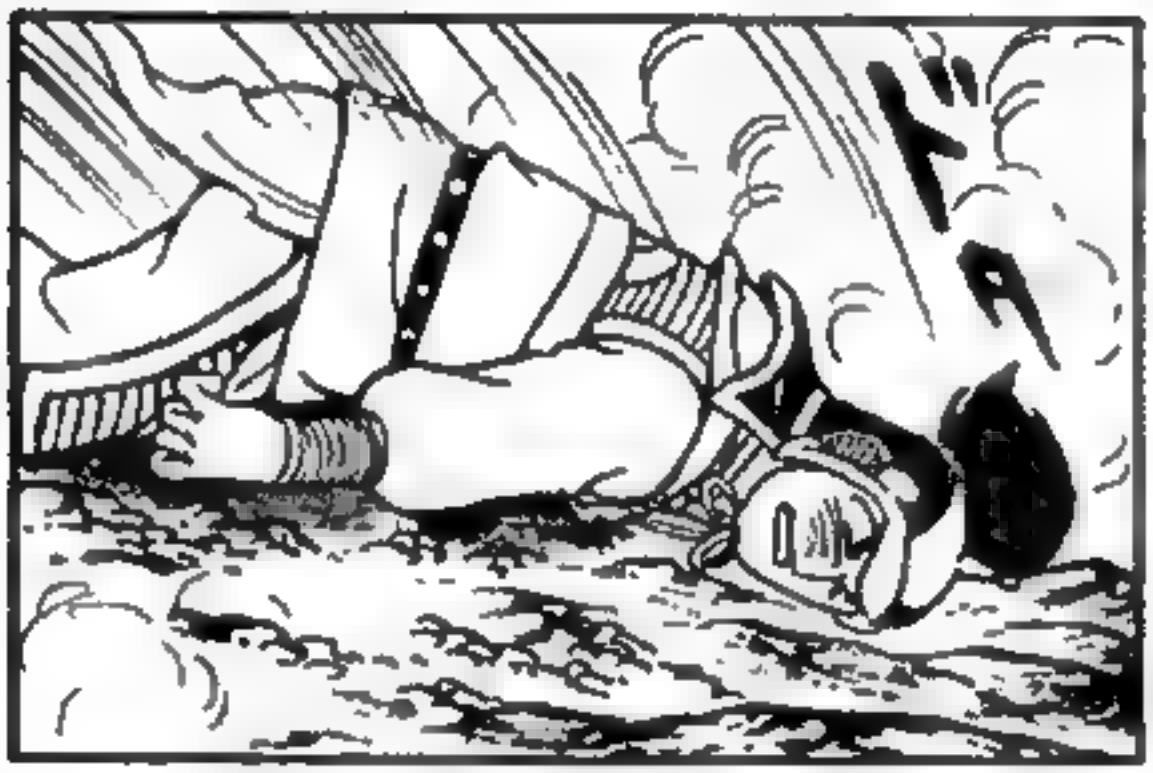
MORE OF WANG PING'S TROOPS... WERE THEY AMBUSHED HERE?

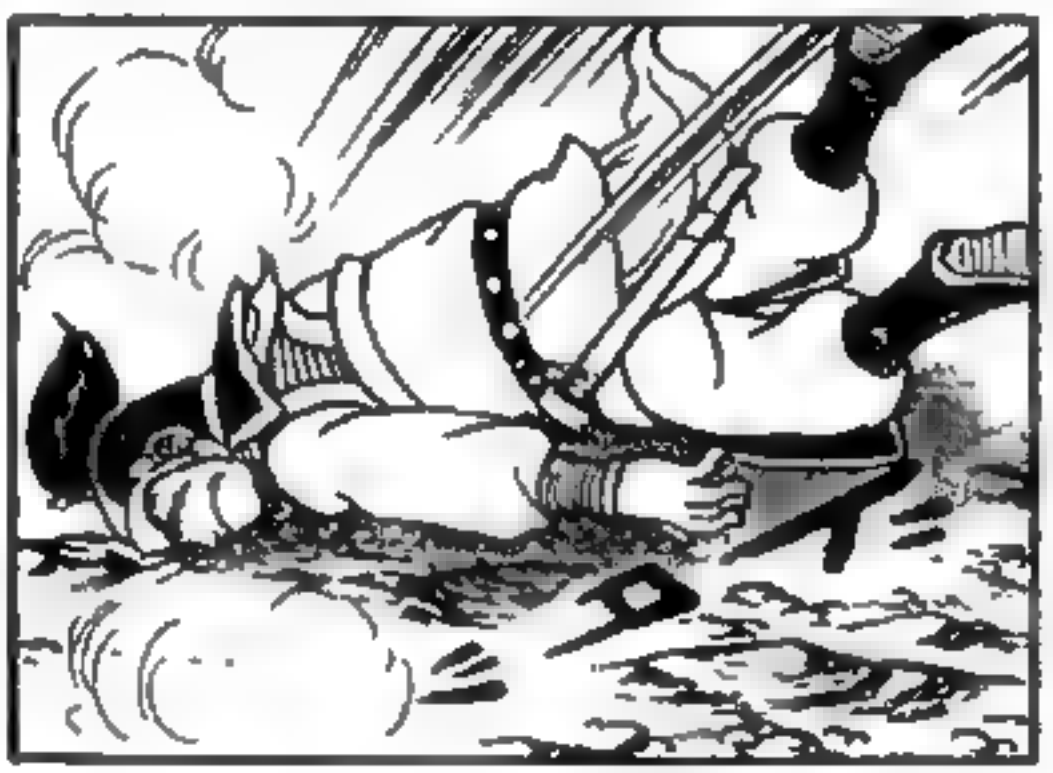
GENERAL, THESE MEN DON'T HAVE ANY VISIBLE WOUNDS!

KAHH!

NGHH!

AGH-





NO, WAIT! DON'T GET CLOSE!

WHAT'S WRONG!?

WHA!?

THERE MUST BE A WAY TO GET THROUGH SINCE WANG PING'S TROOPS AREN'T HERE ANYMORE.

JUDGING FROM THE WITHERED TREES, THERE MUST BE TOXIC FUMES OVER THERE.

SIR, THERE'S A SIGN OVER THERE!

?

BRING IT TO ME!

HERE, SIR.

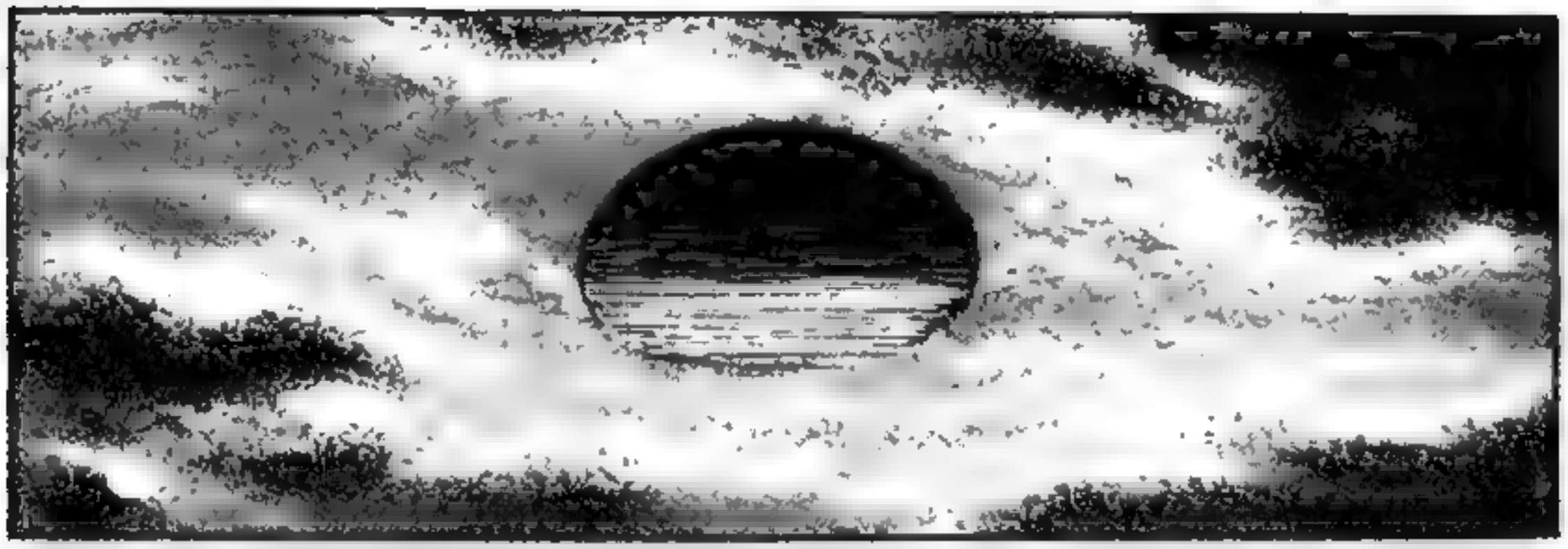
IT SAYS ONLY TO APPROACH NEAR SUNSET.

IT'S WRITTEN BY WANG PING.

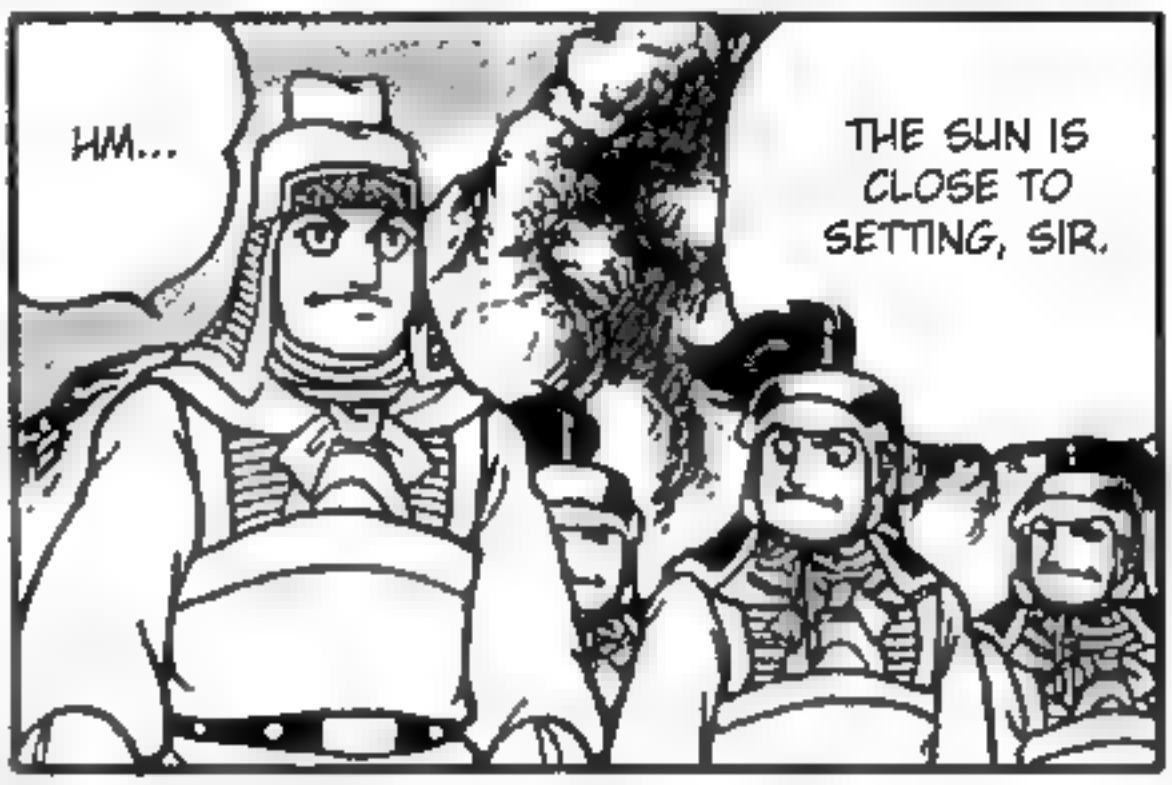
YES, SIR.

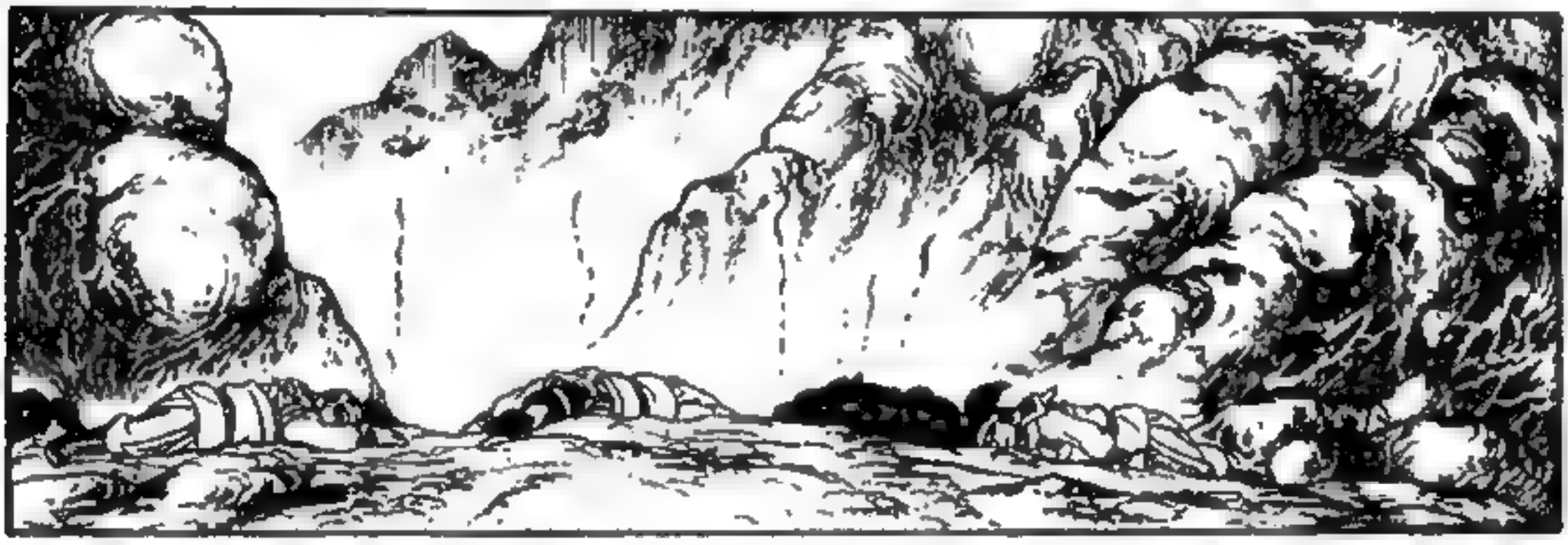
GO ALERT THE CHANCELLOR THAT WANG PING APPEARS TO BE ALIVE.

TAKE A BREATHER WHILE WE WAIT FOR SUNSET, MEN.



AH, LOOK!


HM...
THE SUN IS CLOSE TO SETTING, SIR.



NOW'S OUR CHANCE! LET'S QUICKLY MAKE OUR WAY THROUGH!

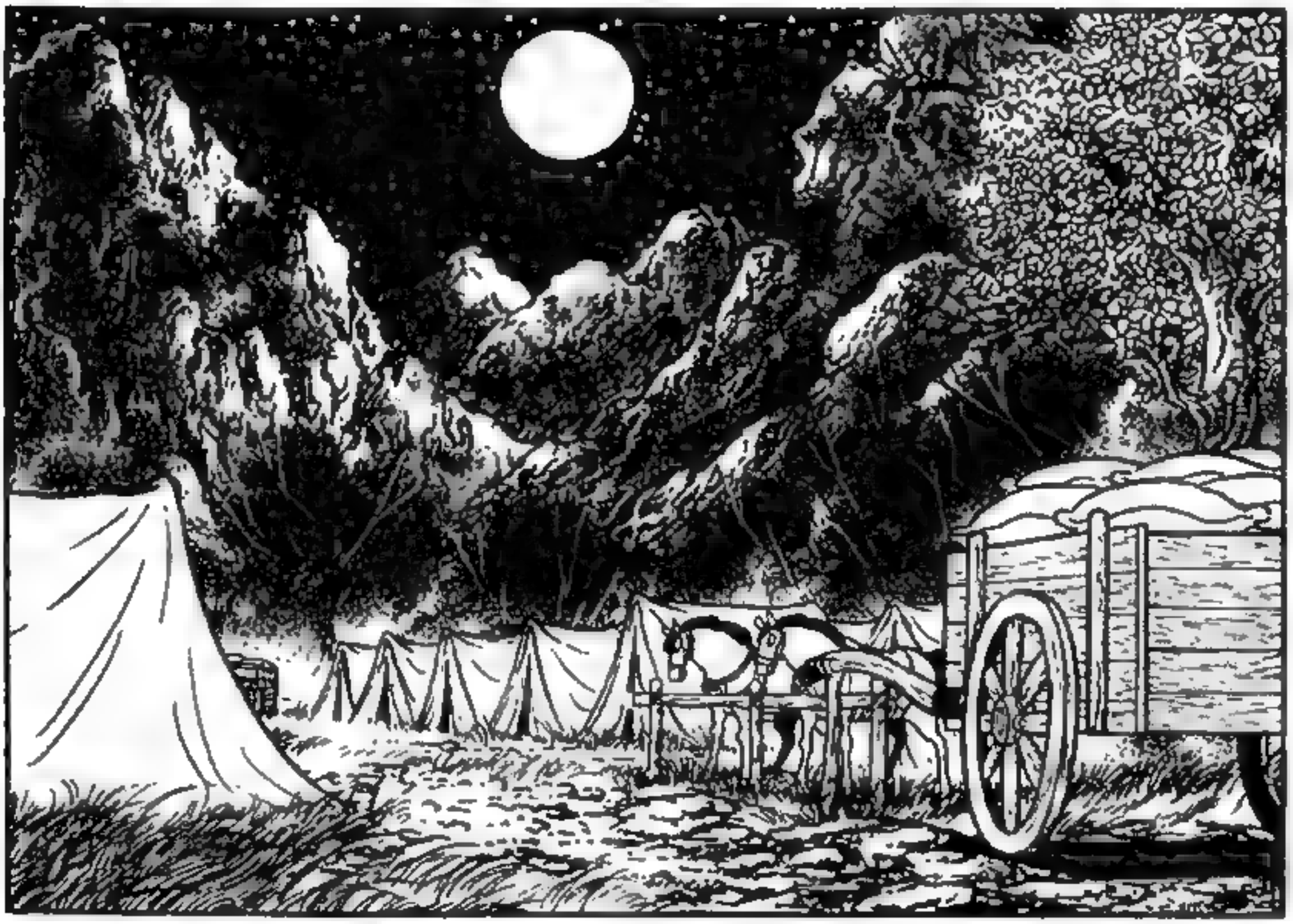
SMOKE STOPPED SPEWING UP FROM THE GROUND!

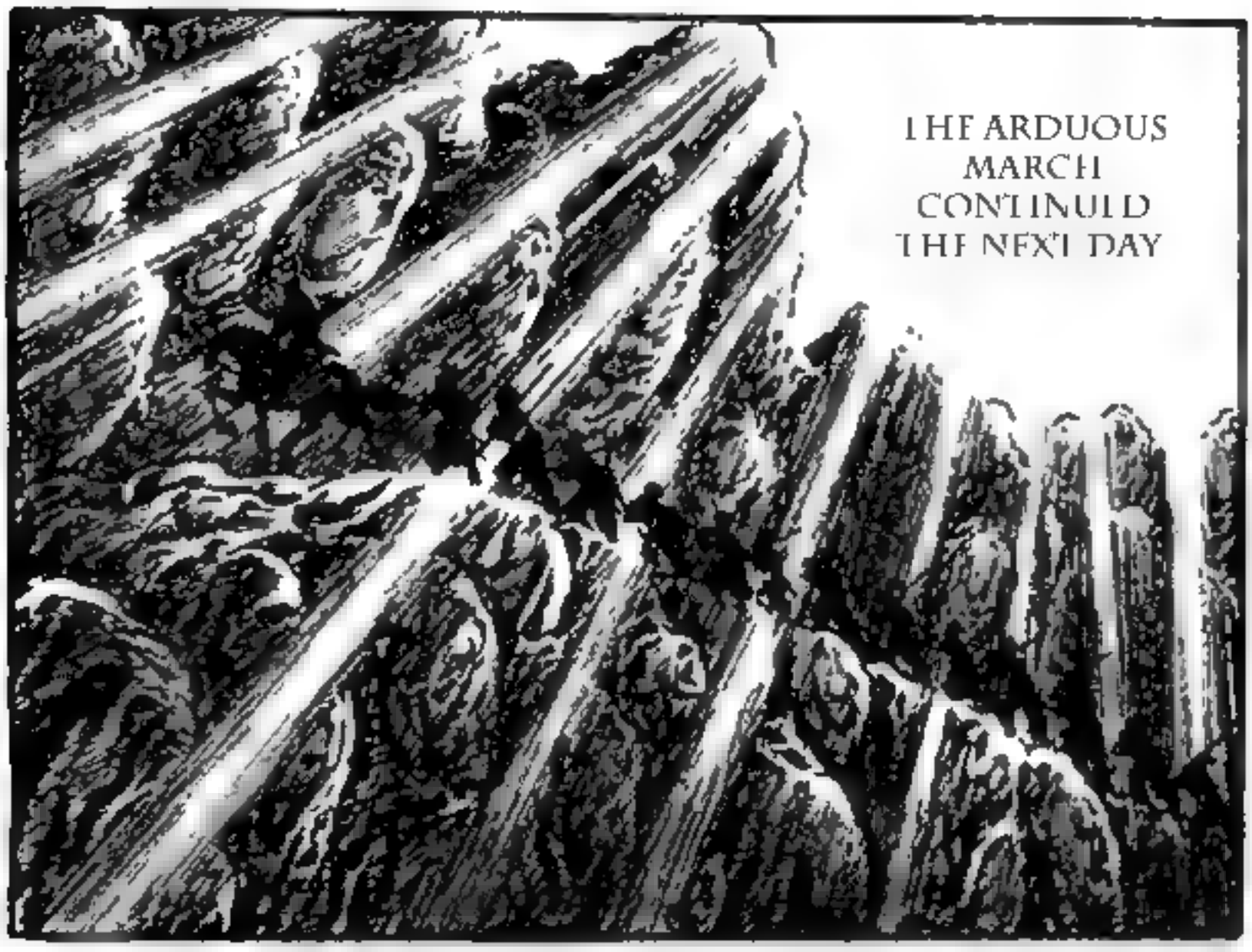
THERE ARE TREES AND GRASSES AGAIN!

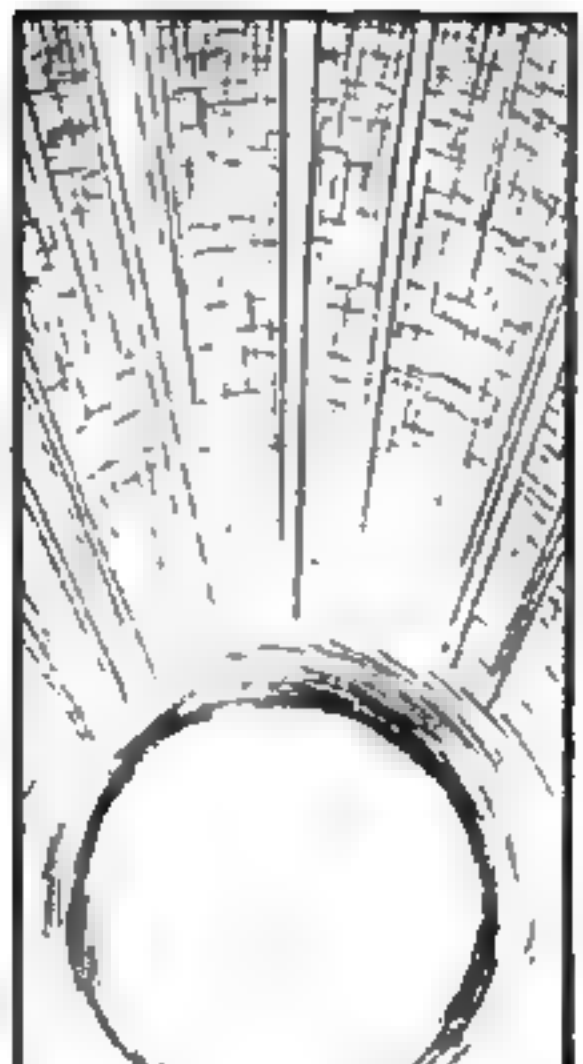
YES, SIR.
DID EVERYONE PASS SAFELY?

THERE SHOULD BE NO WORRIES OF TOXIC FUMES HERE.

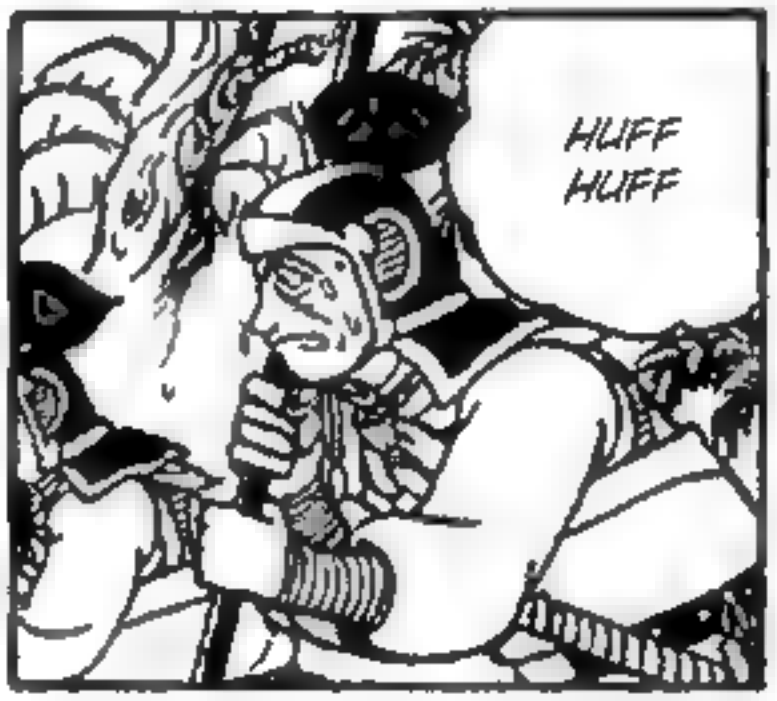
IT'S TOO RISKY MARCHING IN UNKNOWN LANDS AT NIGHT. WE'LL MAKE CAMP HERE FOR NOW.




THE ARDUOUS
MARCH
CONTINUED
THE NEXT DAY



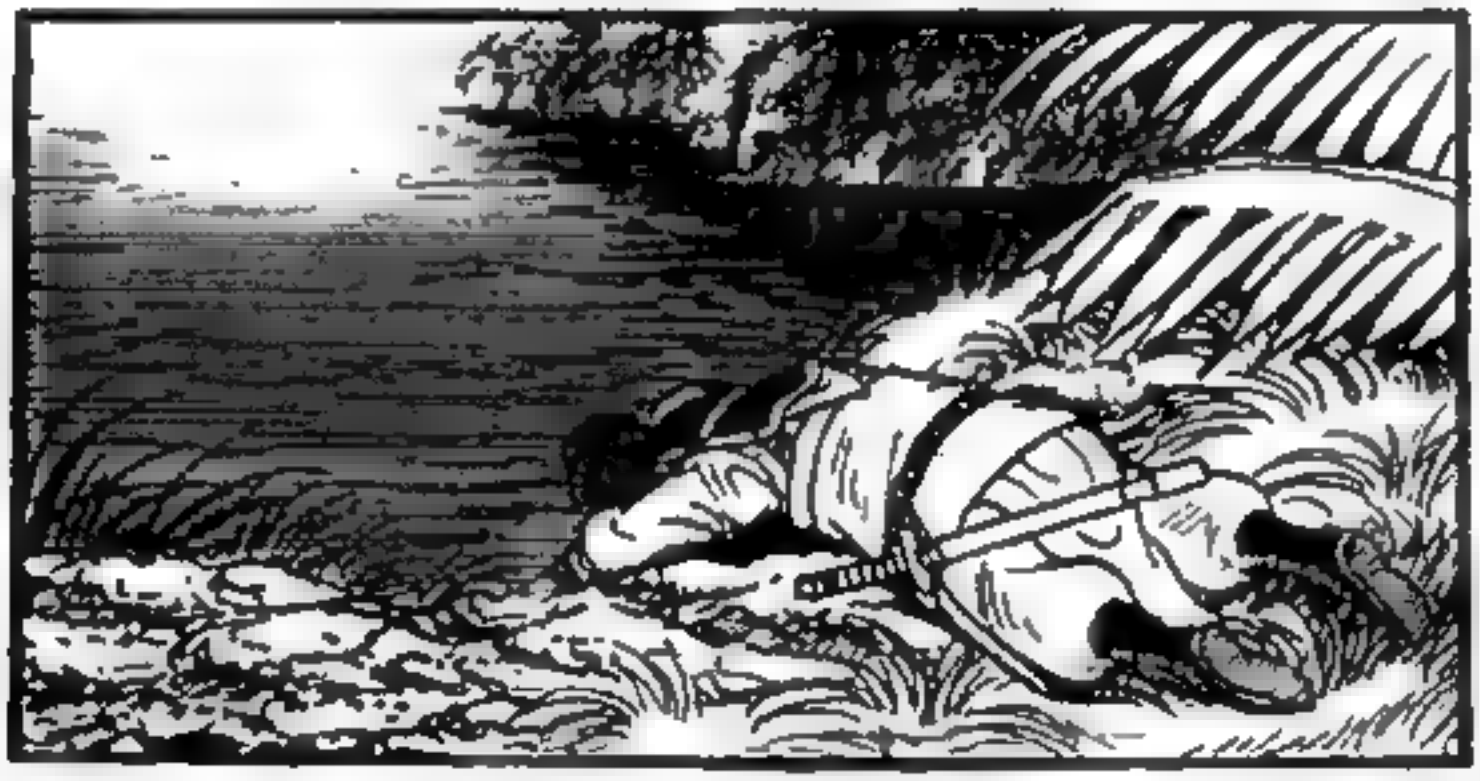
W...
WATER...


HUFF
HUFF

OHH!

WATER! THANK HEAVENS!

WATER!



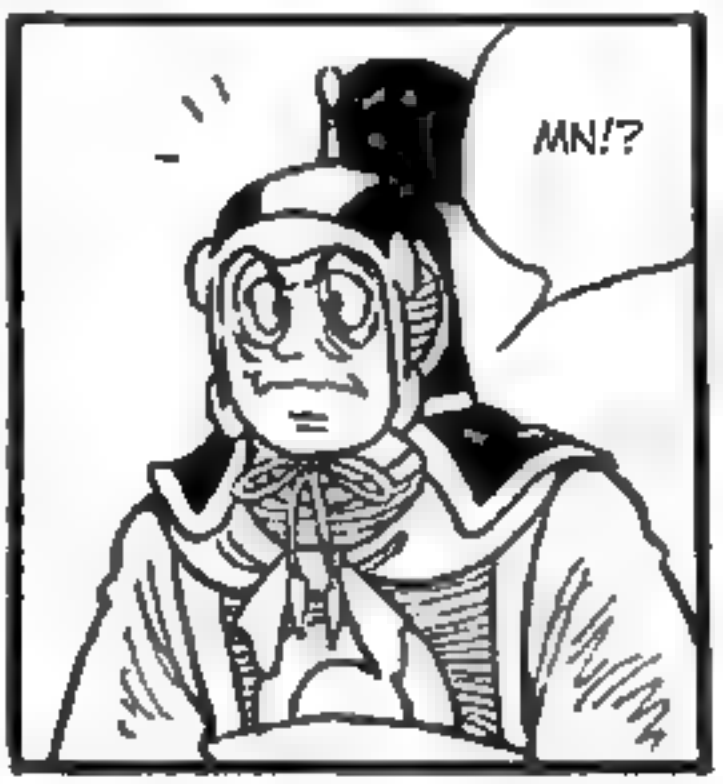
HM?

HALT! SOME-THING IS WRONG!

I SAID HALT!

ガッガッ

KAH!


MN!?

AHH!

AGHHH!
URGH!

I TOLD YOU SOMETHING WAS STRANGE! DON'T APPROACH THAT SPRING!

I HOPE WANG PING AND HIS TROOPS ARE HOLDING UP...

THIS CAN'T BE THE ONLY SOURCE OF WATER HERE. LET'S KEEP ON MARCHING!

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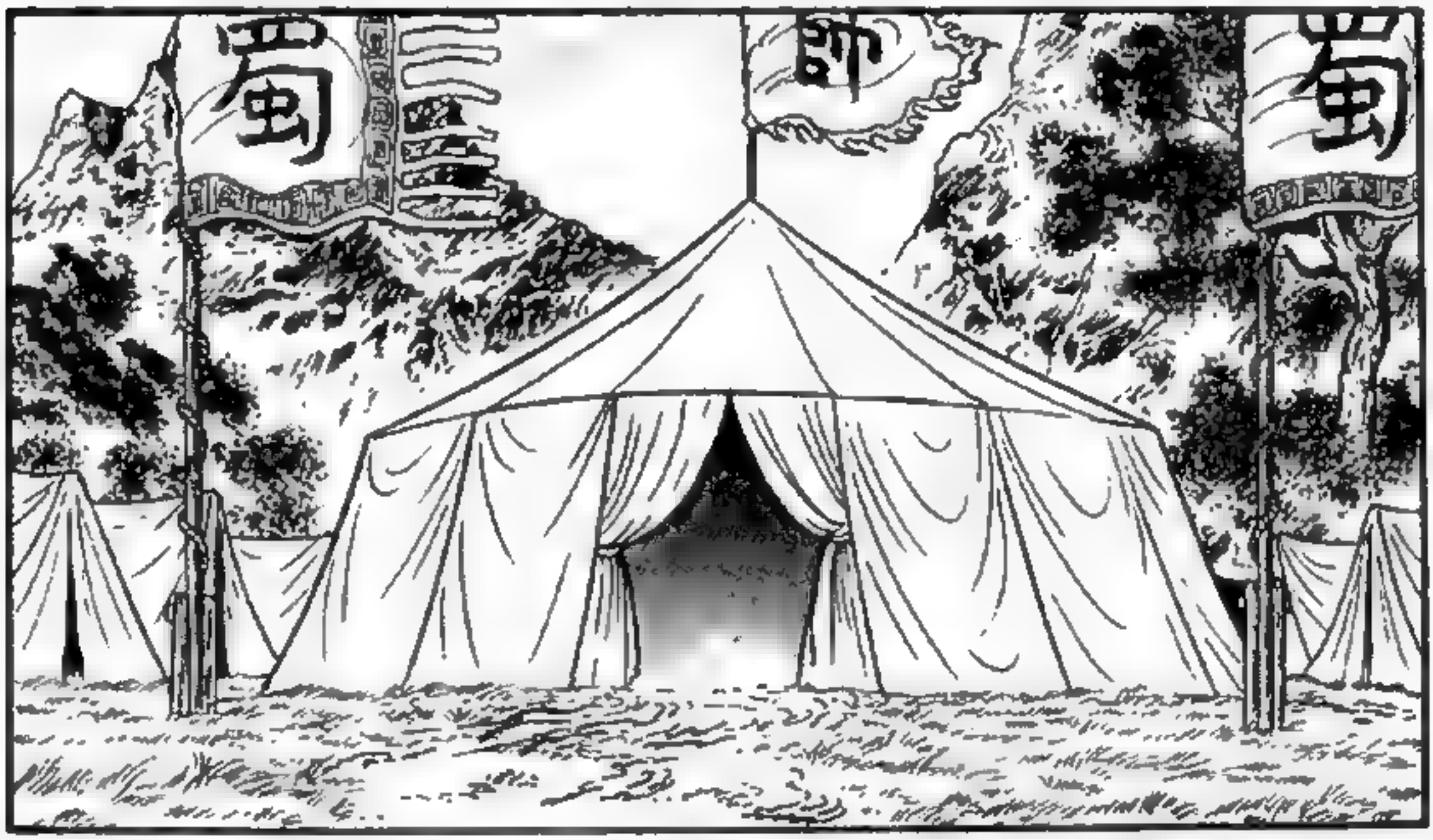
HERMIT OF ETERNAL PEACE



YES, THEY CAME ACROSS TOXIC SPRINGS WHICH TURNED THEM MUTE OR THEIR LIMBS BLACK, BEFORE ULTIMATELY SUCCUMBING TO DEATH.
WHAT!? WANG PING HAS LOST ALMOST ALL HIS SOLDIERS AND GUAN SUO'S TROOPS HAVE TAKEN HEAVY CASUALTIES?

YES, SIR.

THANK YOU FOR ALERTING ME. YOU MAY EXCUSE YOURSE-F.

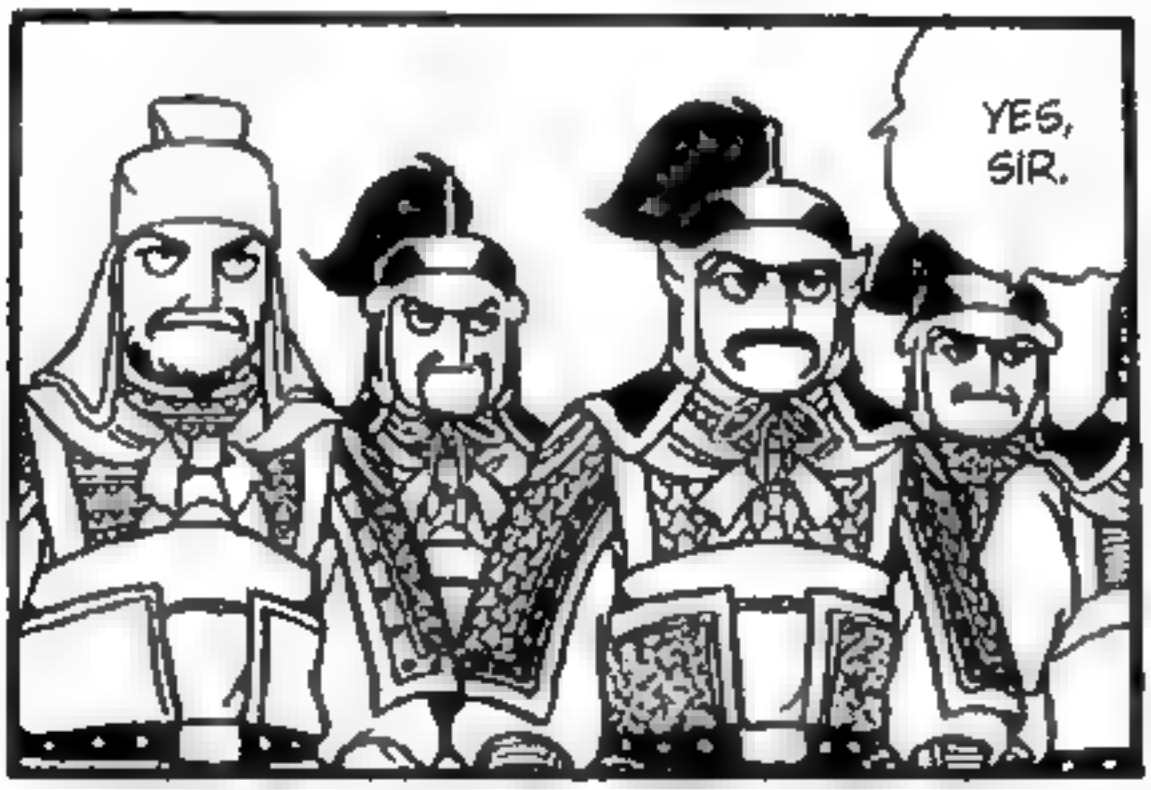
I NEVER THOUGHT MERE SPRINGS COULD BE SO DEADLY...

PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BEST TO WITHDRAW NOW BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

CHANCELLOR, NO MATTER HOW STRONG OUR TROOPS ARE, THEY CANNOT ADVANCE WITHOUT A READY SOURCE OF WATER.

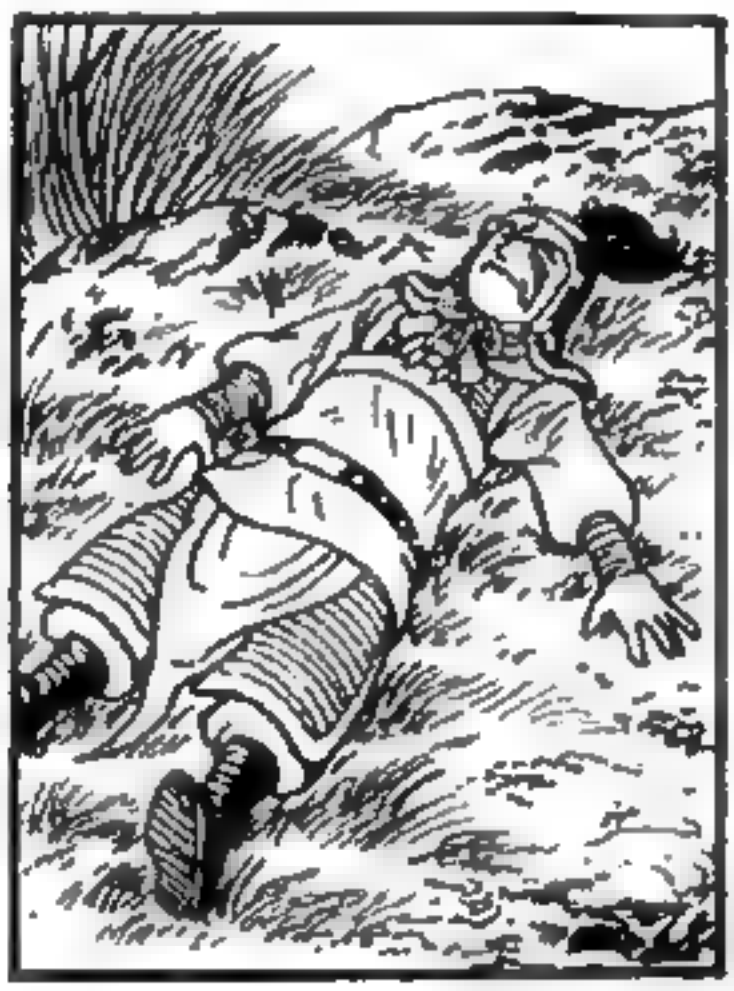
IMAGINE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE NANMAN INVADED OUR LANDS WHILE WE WERE BUSY FIGHTING THE WEI OR WU. A THOROUGH SUBJUGATION OF THE NANMAN TRIBES IS NECES-SARY IF WE ARE TO TURN OUR FULL UNDIVIDED ATTENTION TO THE UNIFICATION OF THE REALM.

ABSOLUTELY NOT! THERE ARE STILL NANMAN TRIBES WHO BEAR ILL WILL AGAINST US. THE MOMENT WE WITHDRAW, MENG HUO WILL DRAW UPON THEIR SUPPORT, HUNT DOWN ALL THE CHIEFS WHO'VE SUBMITTED TO US, AND STIR UP UNREST IN OUR LANDS ONCE MORE!



KNOWING THAT HE COULD NOT AFFORD TO WITHDRAW, KONGMING LED HIS ARMY FORWARD INTO THE JUNGLE

YES, SIR.
SO THIS IS THE SPRING THAT WILL KILL YOU INSTANTLY?



LOAD THE SICK ON THE WAGONS AND SEE TO IT THEY ARE CARED FOR.

WELL DONE IN MAKING YOUR WAY THIS FAR.

BY THE TIME I REACHED HERE, NEARLY HALF MY TROOPS HAD DIED AND THE OTHER HALF WERE INJURED WITH NO SIGNS OF RECOVERING. AS I ONLY HAD 100 MEN STILL STANDING, I COULD NOT ADVANCE ANY FURTHER AND AWAITED YOUR ARRIVAL.

YES, SIR.

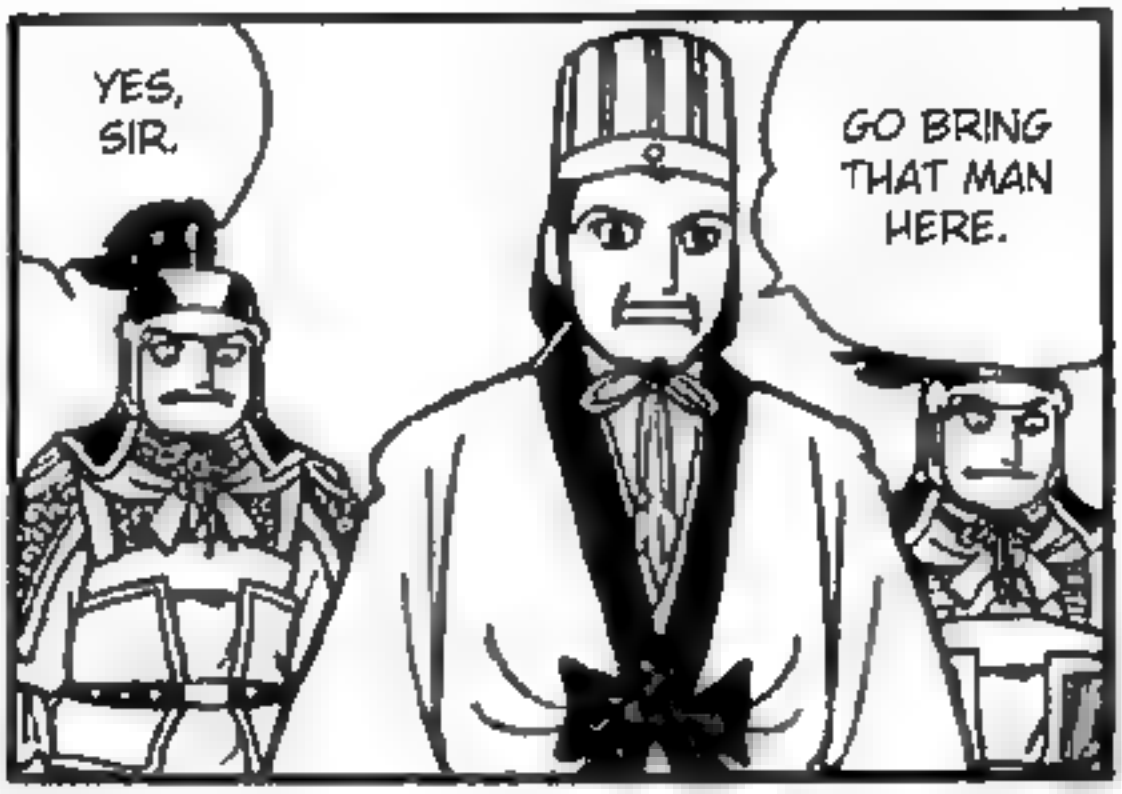
LET US SEE IF THERE'S ANYTHING NOTABLE IN THIS AREA.

YES...

CHANCELLOR, WE CANNOT REMAIN HERE IF THERE'S NO DRINKABLE WATER.

HMM, THE TERRAIN HERE IS QUITE ROUGH...

HM?


YES, SIR.
GO BRING THAT MAN HERE.

YOU THERE! WAIT!

Y-YES, SIR.
OUR CHAN-CELLOR WISHES TO TALK TO YOU. COME.

IF YOU LIVE HERE, MAY I ASK WHERE YOU GET YOUR WATER FROM?

YES, SIR.

ARE YOU A LOCAL?

DO YOU KNOW OF ANY STREAMS OR SPRINGS NEARBY THAT COULD SUPPLY WATER TO MORE PEOPLE?

HMM...

MY FAMILY DRINKS WATER FROM A MODEST WELL.

HMM, THERE IS ONE...

ABOUT 20-30 LI THAT WAY IS A VALLEY. AND IN THAT VALLEY IS A SPRING KNOWN AS THE SPRING OF ETERNAL PEACE. THERE IS ALSO A HERMIT WHO LIVES BY THE STREAM. THE LOCALS SIMPLY CALL HIM HERMIT OF ETERNAL PEACE.

WHERE IS IT?

YES, AND HE'S KNOWN TO TREAT ANY LOCALS OR TRAVELLERS SICK FROM DRINKING THE FOUR TOXIC SPRINGS OF THIS AREA.

A HERMIT IN SUCH A REMOTE PLACE?

THANK YOU. HERE'S A REWARD FOR ANSWERING MY QUESTIONS.

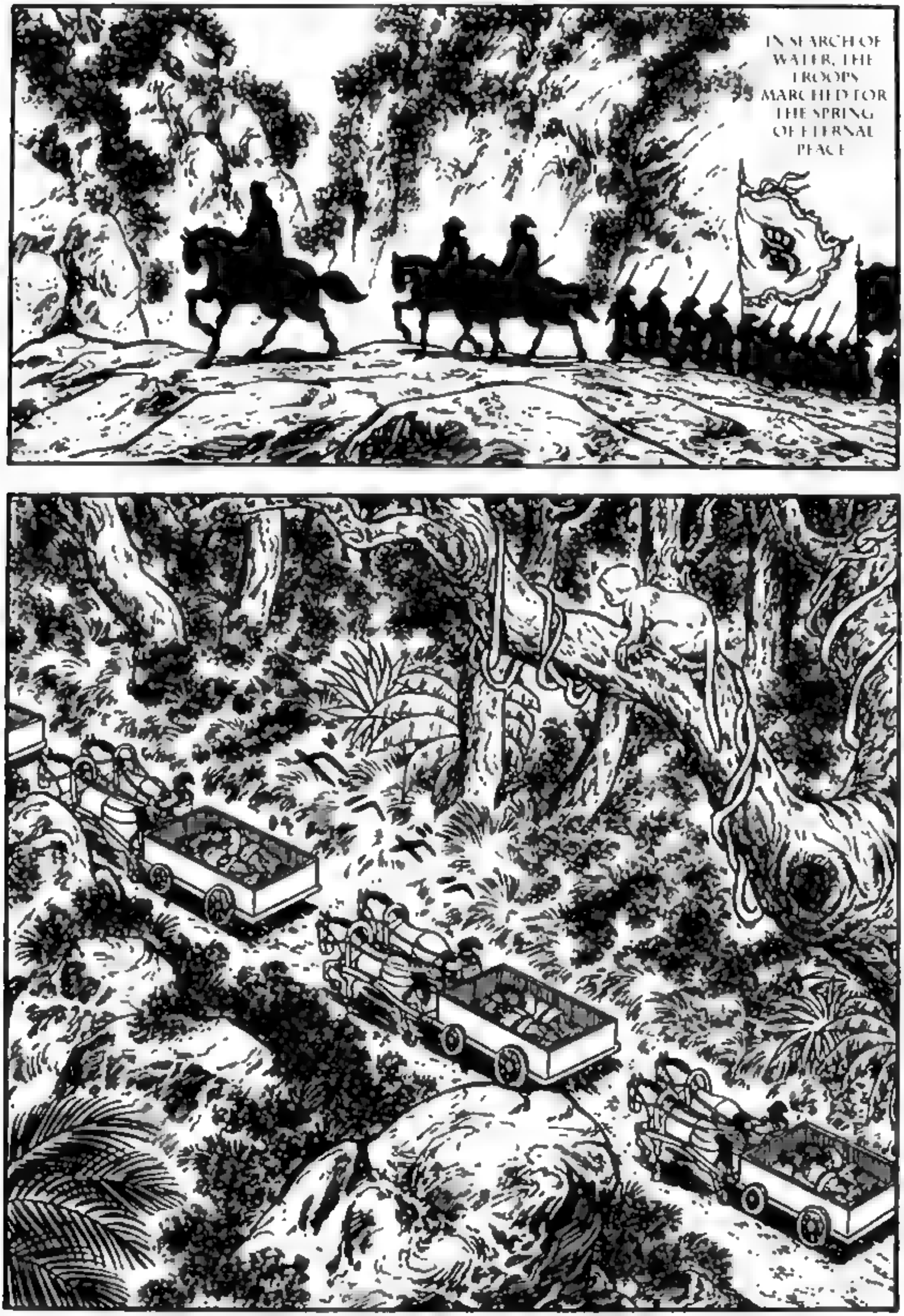
YES, SIR.

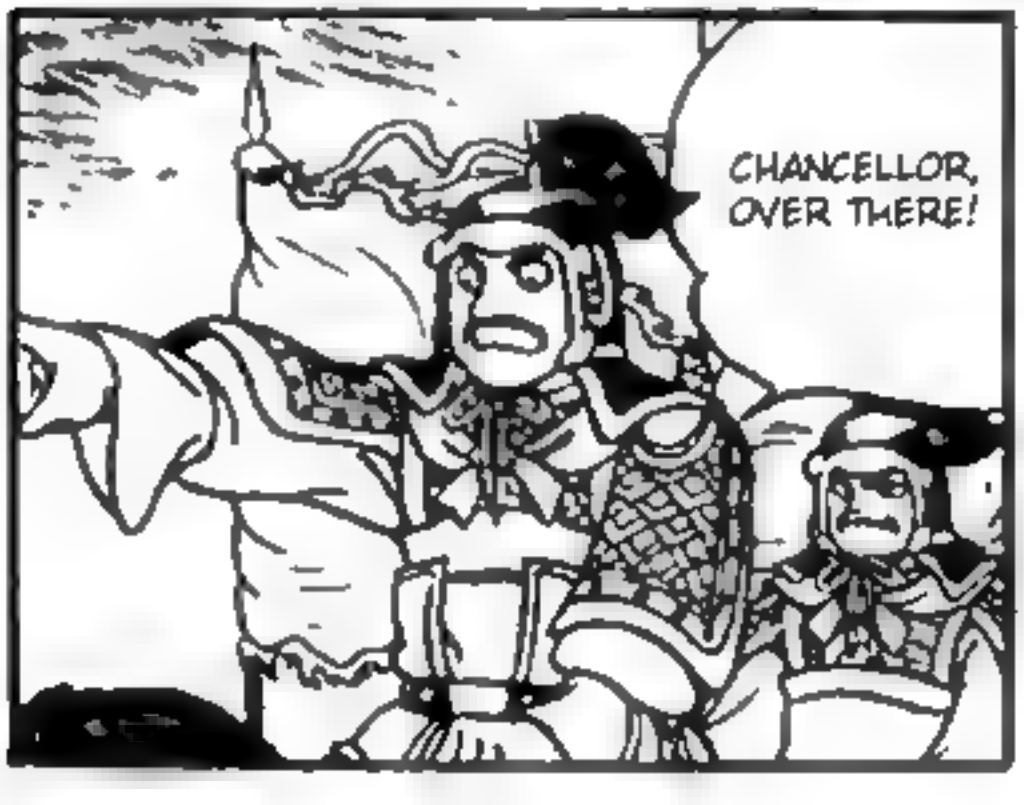
HE KNOWS HOW TO TREAT PEOPLE WHO DRANK FROM THE TOXIC SPRINGS?

YES, SIR.

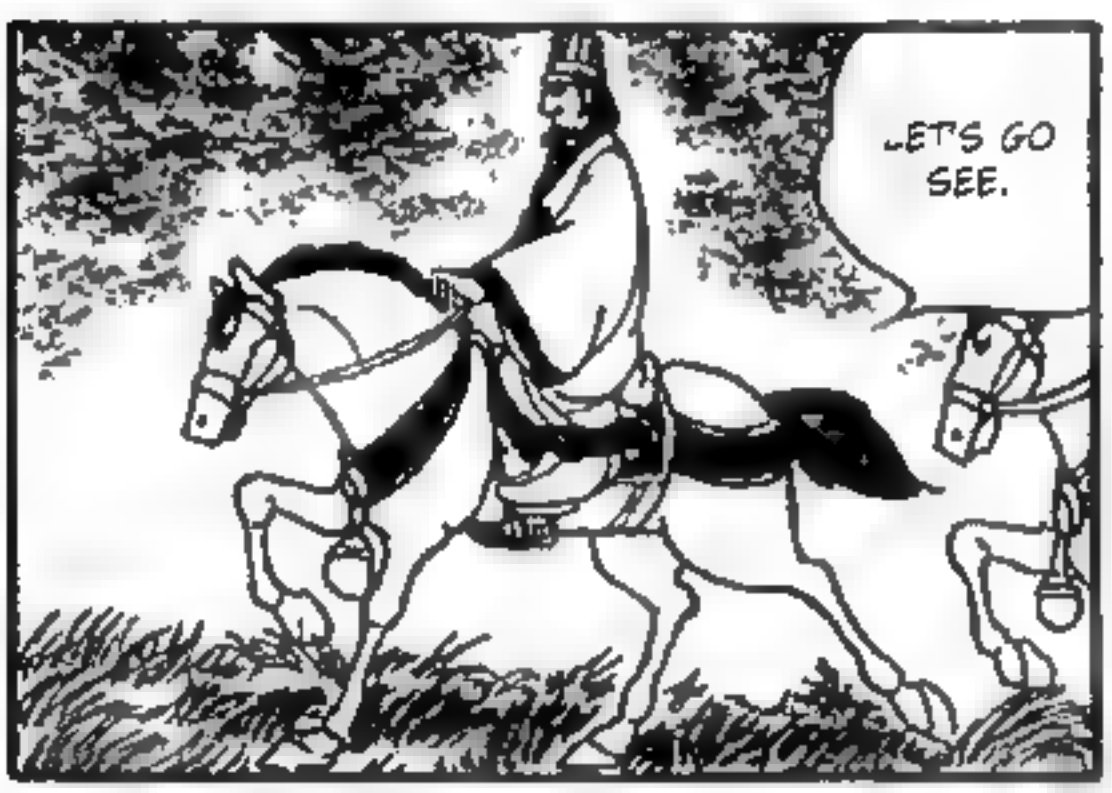
LET'S HEAD OVER TO THE SPRING OF ETERNAL PEACE.

THANK YOU, SIR.

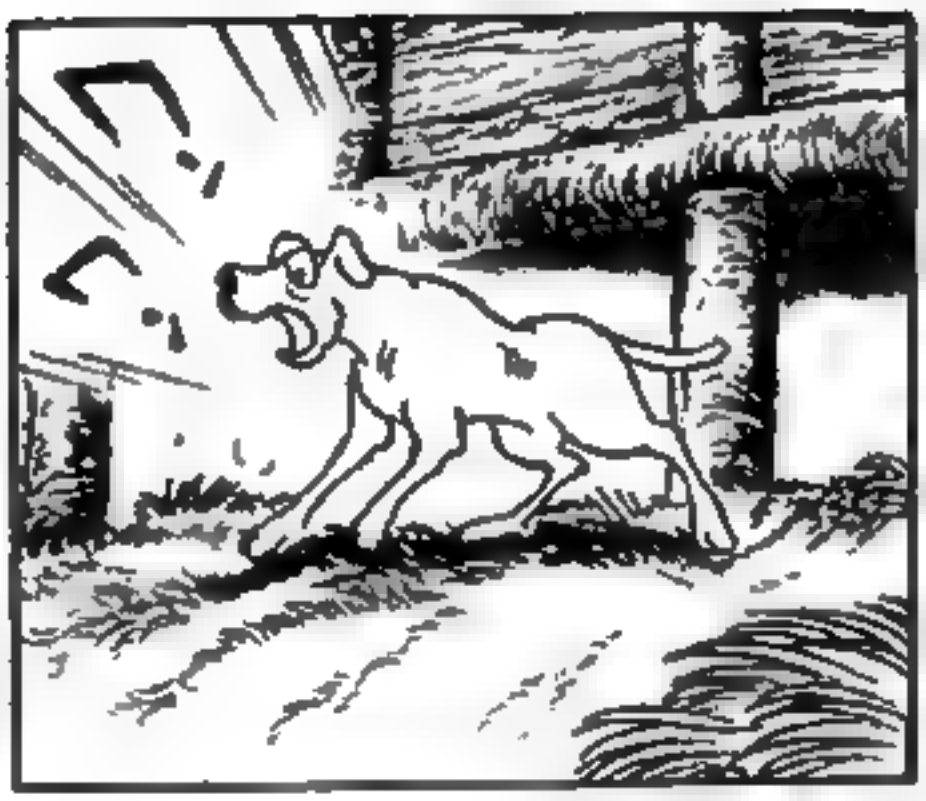

IN SEARCH OF WATER, THE TROOPS MARCHED FOR THE SPRING OF ETERNAL PEACE

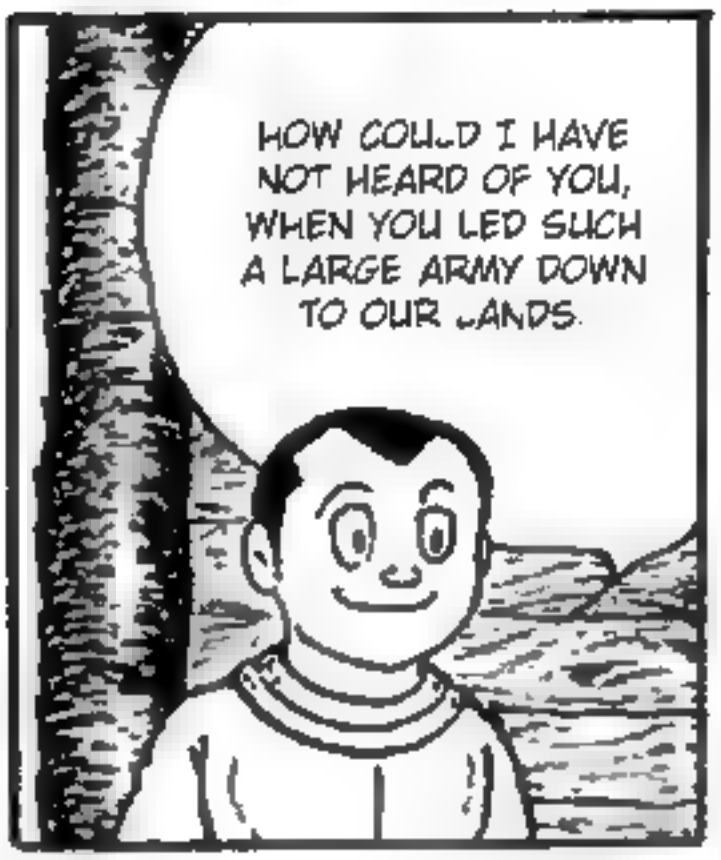

CHANCELLOR, OVER THERE!

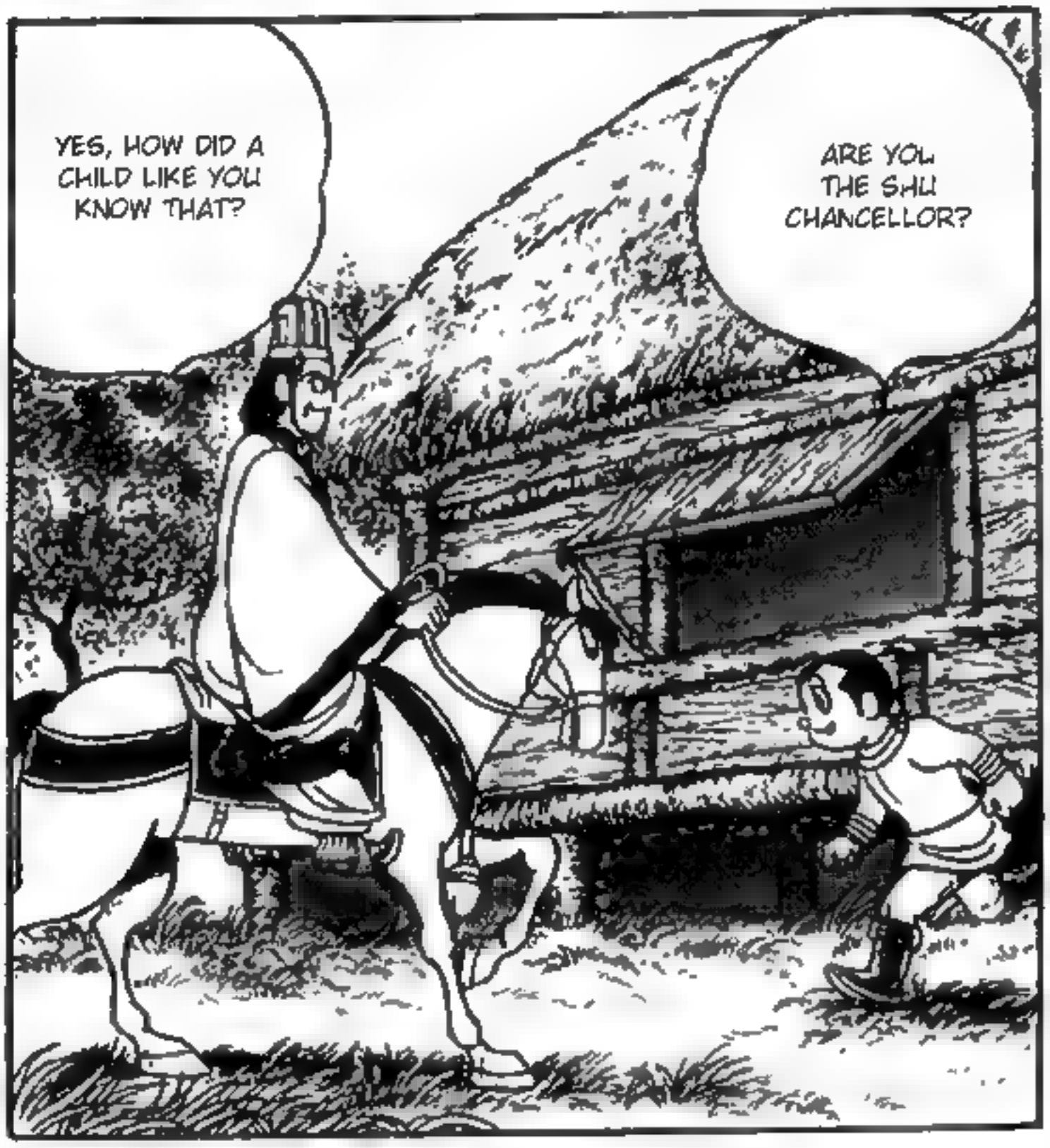
IT SHOULD BE...
IS THE SPRING NOT SUPPOSED TO BE IN THIS VALLEY?


LET'S GO SEE.

YES, PERHAPS.
MAYBE THAT'S THE HOME OF THAT HERMIT THE LOCAL TALKED ABOUT...




HOW COULD I HAVE NOT HEARD OF YOU, WHEN YOU LED SUCH A LARGE ARMY DOWN TO OUR LANDS.


YES, HOW DID A CHILD LIKE YOU KNOW THAT?
ARE YOU THE SHU CHANCELLOR?

I SEE.

MIGHT I PRESUME YOU TO BE THE HERMIT OF ETERNAL PEACE?

WATCH YOUR MOUTH, CHILD. THAT IS NO WAY TO ADDRESS A CHANCELLOR.

I HEARD THERE WAS A SPRING IN THIS VALLEY.

YES, THAT IS WHAT THE LOCALS CALL ME.

CAN YOU GUIDE ME TO IT?

IS THAT SO?

YES, ITS WATER IS USED TO TREAT THOSE WHO'VE DRUNK FROM THE FOUR TOXIC SPRINGS OF THIS REGION, SO THE LOCALS HAVE NAMED IT SPRING OF ETERNAL PEACE.

A SIMPLE TASK.

COME THIS WAY, SIR.

THIS IS THE SPRING, SIR.

SEE, PER-FECTLY FINE.

ALLOW ME TO TEST FOR POISON.

YES, SIR.

BRING THE REST OF THE TROOPS HERE.

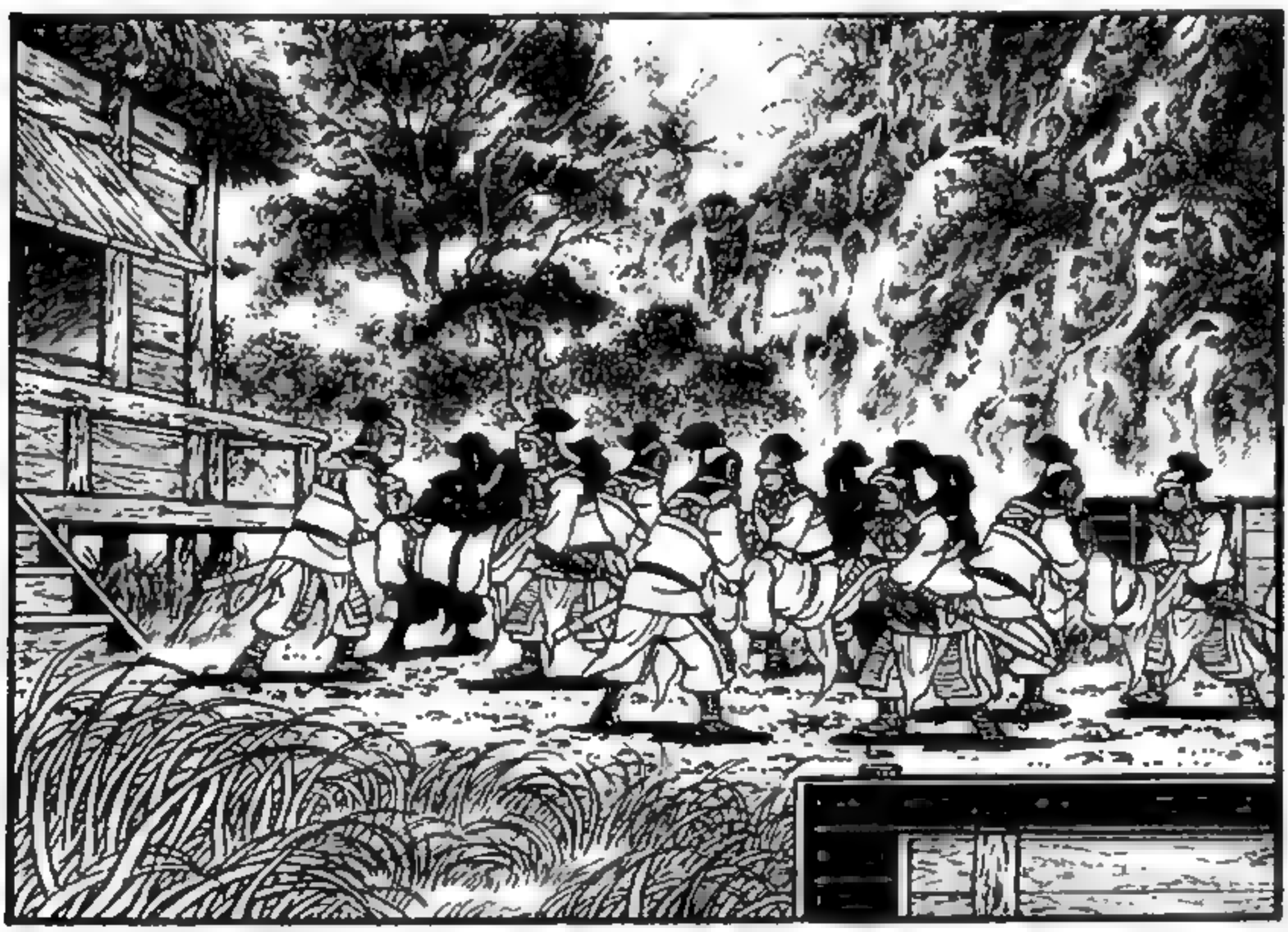
YES, PLEASE BRING THEM TO MY HOUSE. I'LL GET THE MEDICINE READY IN THE MEANWHILE.

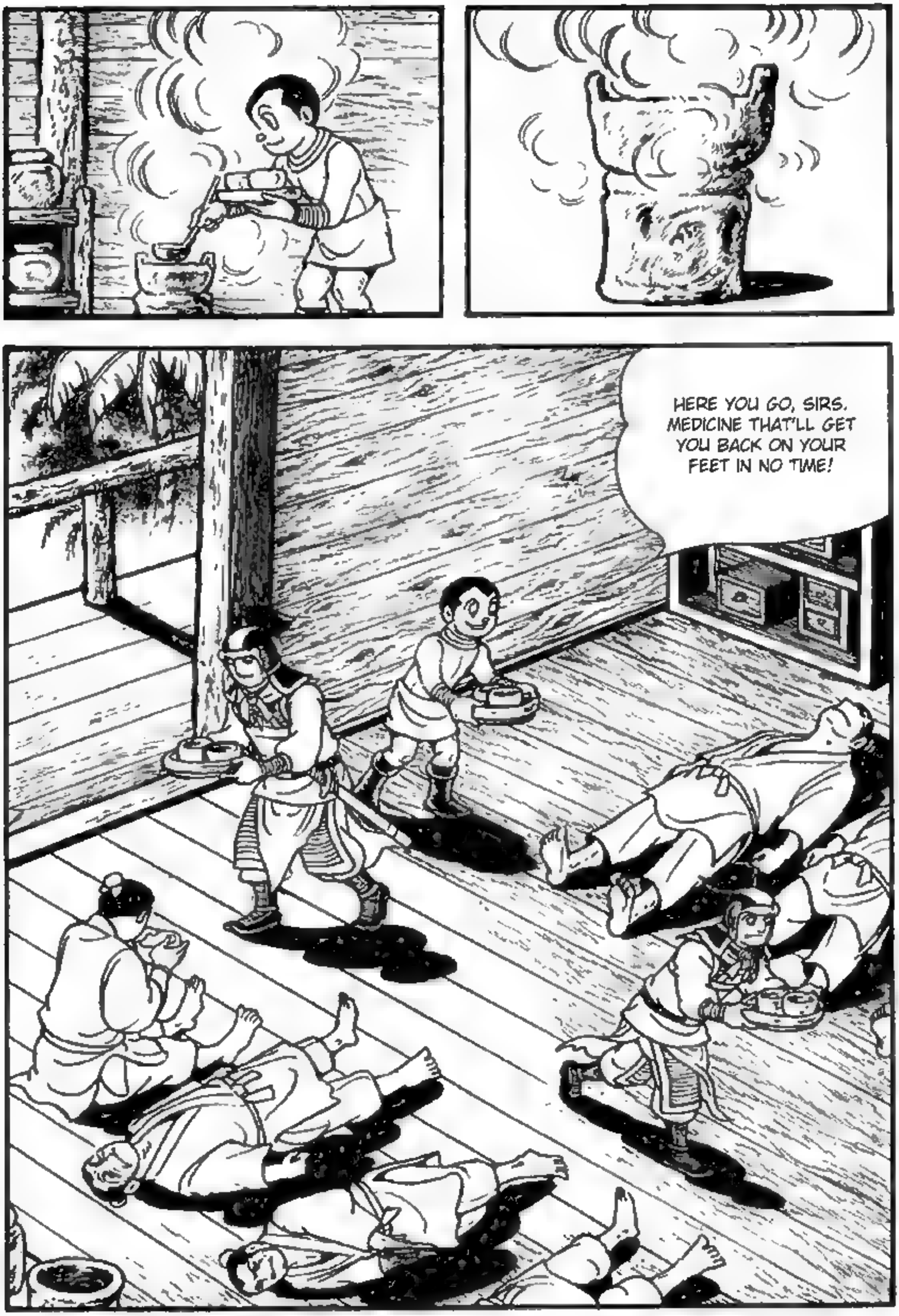
YES, SIR.

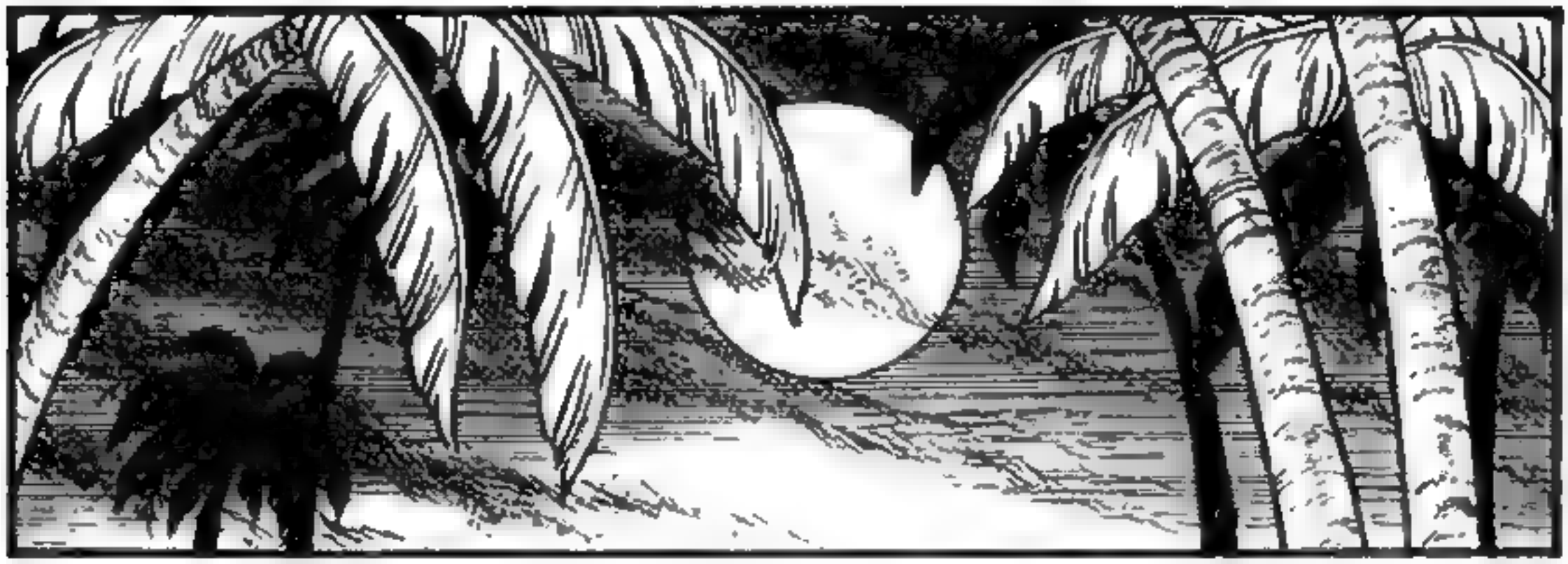
I HEARD YOU WERE ABLE TO HEAL THOSE WHO DRANK FROM THE FOUR TOXIC SPRINGS. IS THAT TRUE?

YES, SIR.

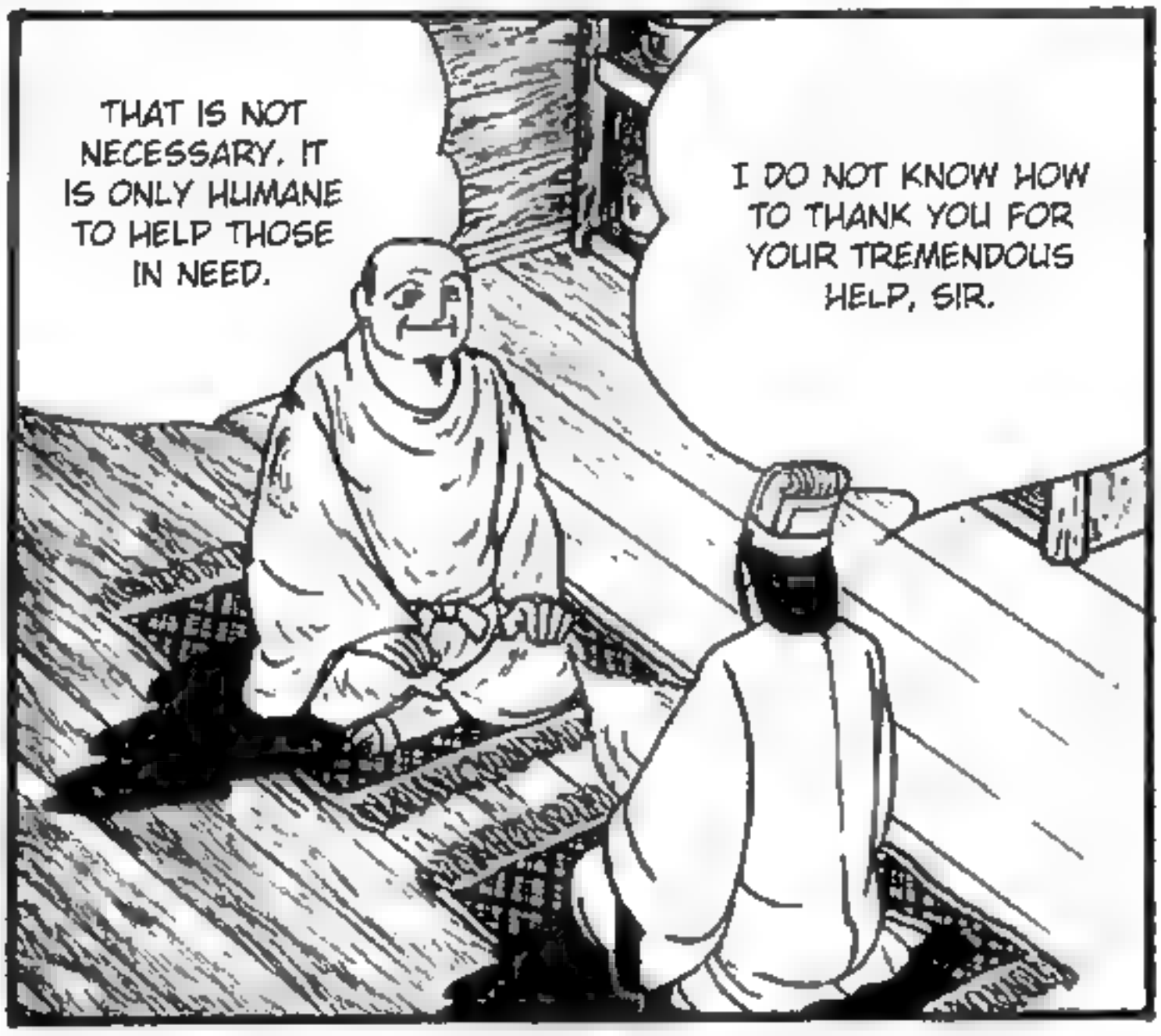
IT SEEMS WE'VE FOUND OUR LIGHT IN THE DARK. BRING THE WOUNDED OVER HERE AT ONCE.




HERE YOU GO, SIRS. MEDICINE THAT'LL GET YOU BACK ON YOUR FEET IN NO TIME!

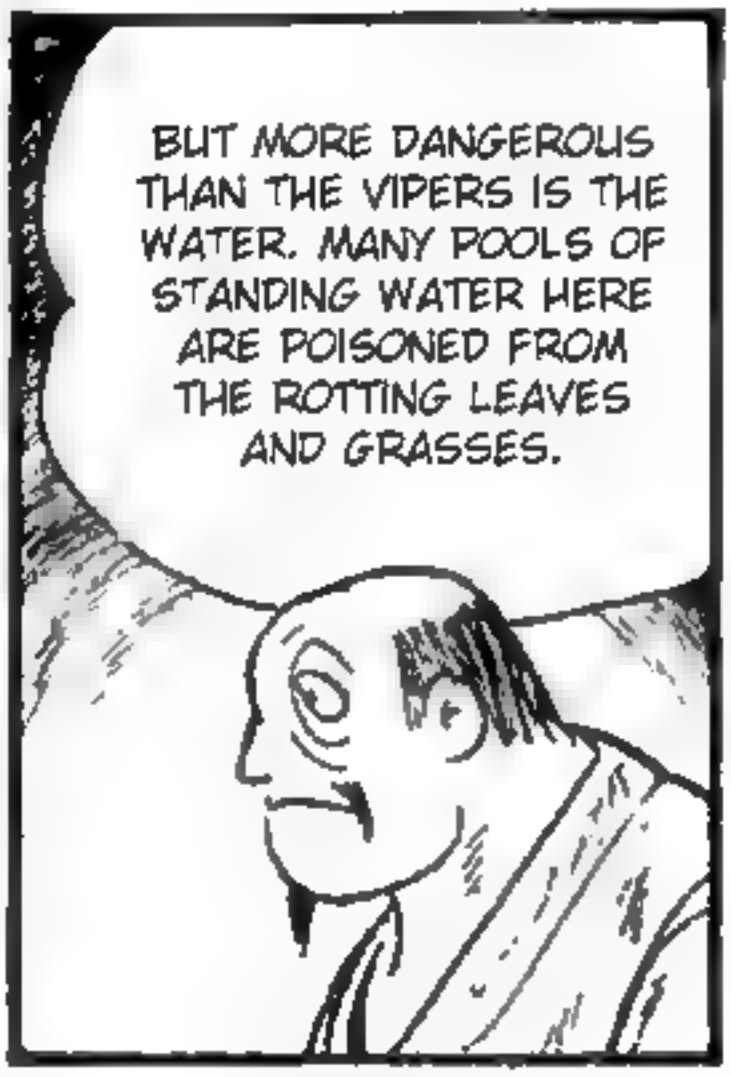


IF YOU PLAN TO CONTINUE YOUR MARCH, YOU MUST BE CAREFUL OF VENOMOUS VIPERS.


THAT IS NOT NECESSARY. IT IS ONLY HUMANE TO HELP THOSE IN NEED.
I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR TREMENDOUS HELP, SIR.

I'M AFRAID NOT, SIR. I ADVISE YOU TO DIG INTO THE GROUND TO FIND SAFE WATER TO DRINK.

SO THE FOUR TOXIC SPRINGS AREN'T THE ONLY ONES TO WATCH OUT FOR?


BUT MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE VIPERS IS THE WATER. MANY POOLS OF STANDING WATER HERE ARE POISONED FROM THE ROTTING LEAVES AND GRASSES.

WELL, I HAVE NO NEED TO HIDE MY NAME. I AM MENG JIE, BROTHER TO MENG HUO.

HA...
THANK YOU AGAIN, WISE HERMIT OF ETERNAL PEACE. MAY I ASK WHAT YOUR TRUE NAME IS?

WHAT?

MY OTHER TWO BROTHERS ARE MATERIALISTIC AND VAINGLORIOUS. I HAVE SCOLDED THEM AND TRIED TO SET THEM ON THE RIGHT PATH BUT TO NO AVAIL.

I AM THE ELDEST, MENG HUO THE SECOND, AND MENG YOU THE YOUNGEST.

I SEE...

20 YEARS AGO, I LEFT ALL MY POSSESSIONS AND TITLES TO LIVE AS A SIMPLE HERMIT HERE.

NO, NO. I WOULD NOT HAVE DECIDED TO LIVE AS A HERMIT IF I EVER DESIRED FOR SUCH THINGS.

IF ONLY YOU WERE THE NANMAN KING, THE NANMAN COULD LIVE HAPPILY IN PEACE. SHOULD YOU WISH, I CAN HAVE YOU APPOINTED AS THE NEW NANMAN KING.

IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME THEN, I MUST GO CHECK UP ON THE PATIENTS.

AS THE OLD SAYING GOES, TALENTED MEN ARE NOT TO BE FOUND IN THE MOST CROWDED OF PLACES, BUT IN THE MOST REMOTE LOCATIONS...

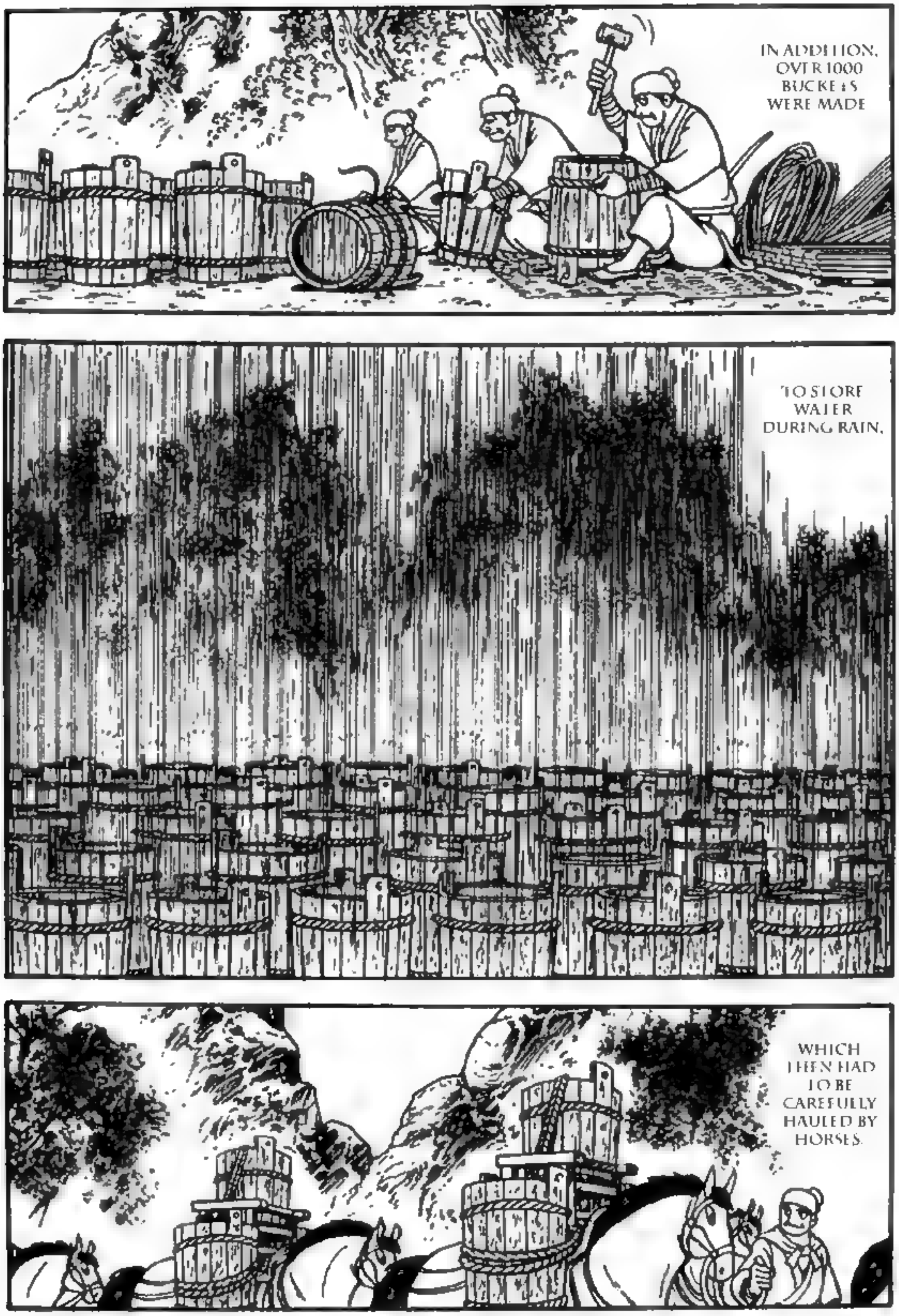
THE SICK SOLDIERS SOON RECOVERED THANKS TO THE HERMIT'S MEDICINE.

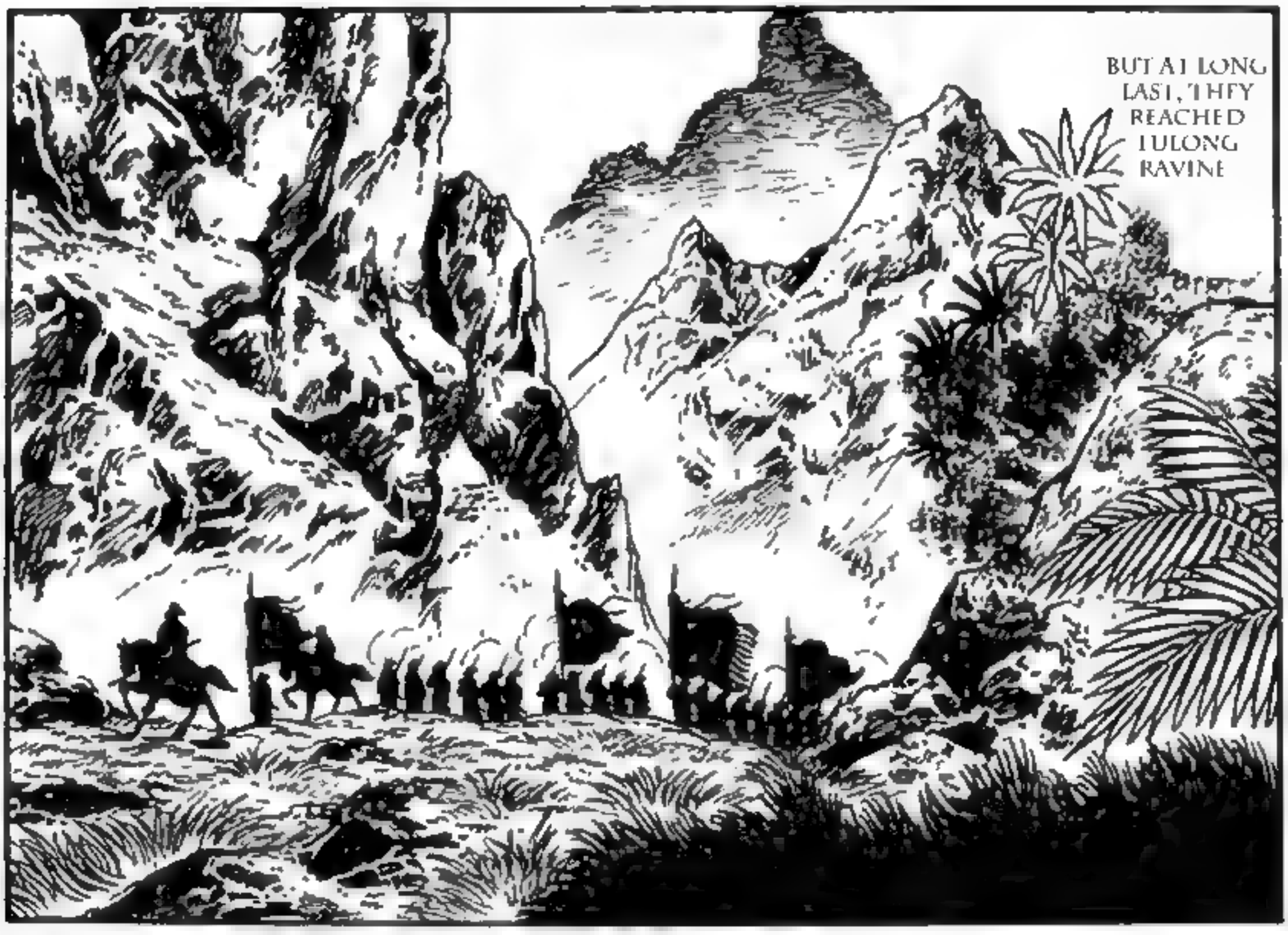
AND THE SHU ARMY RESUMED ITS MARCH

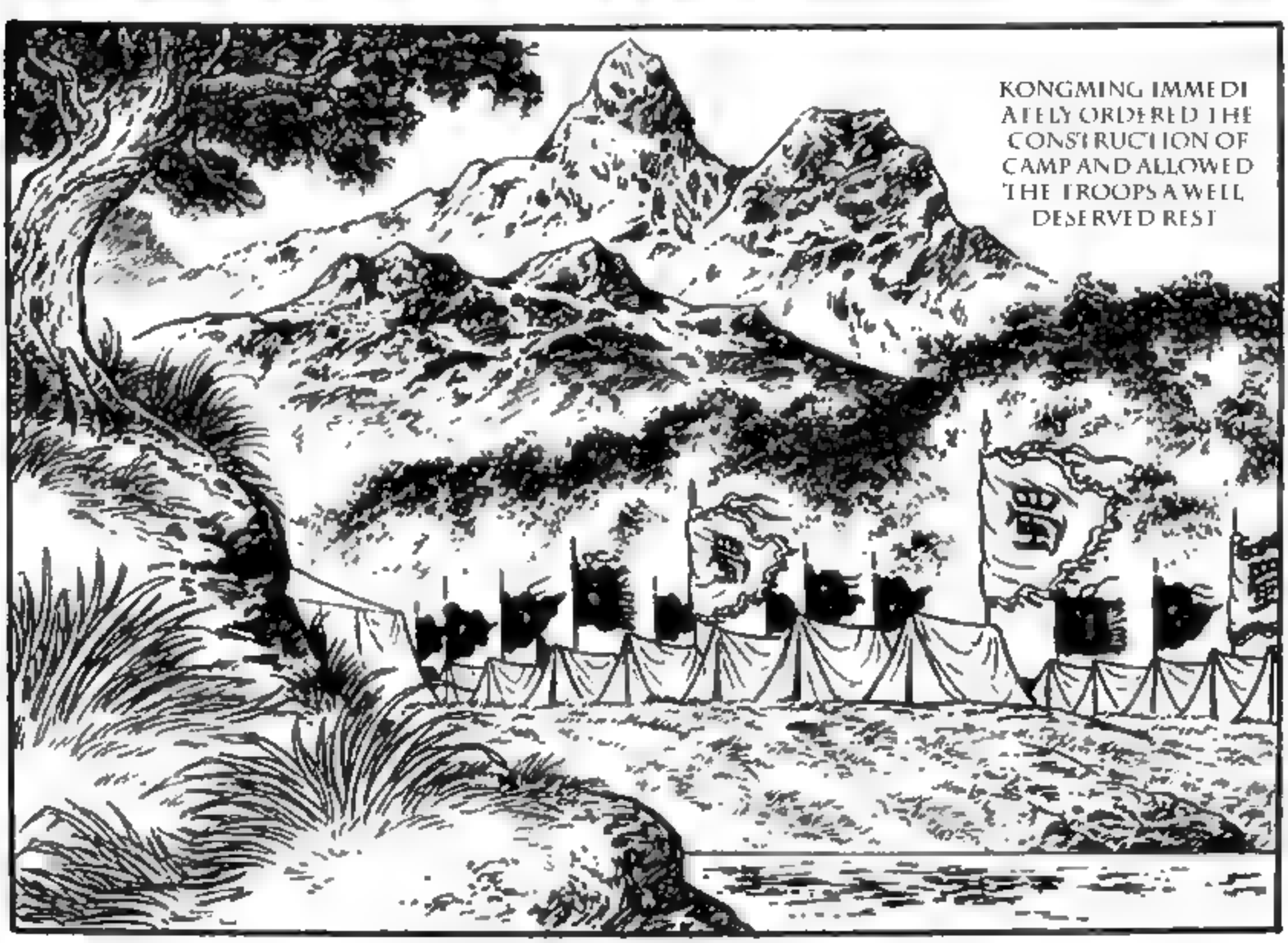
TO FIND
RINKABLE
WATER

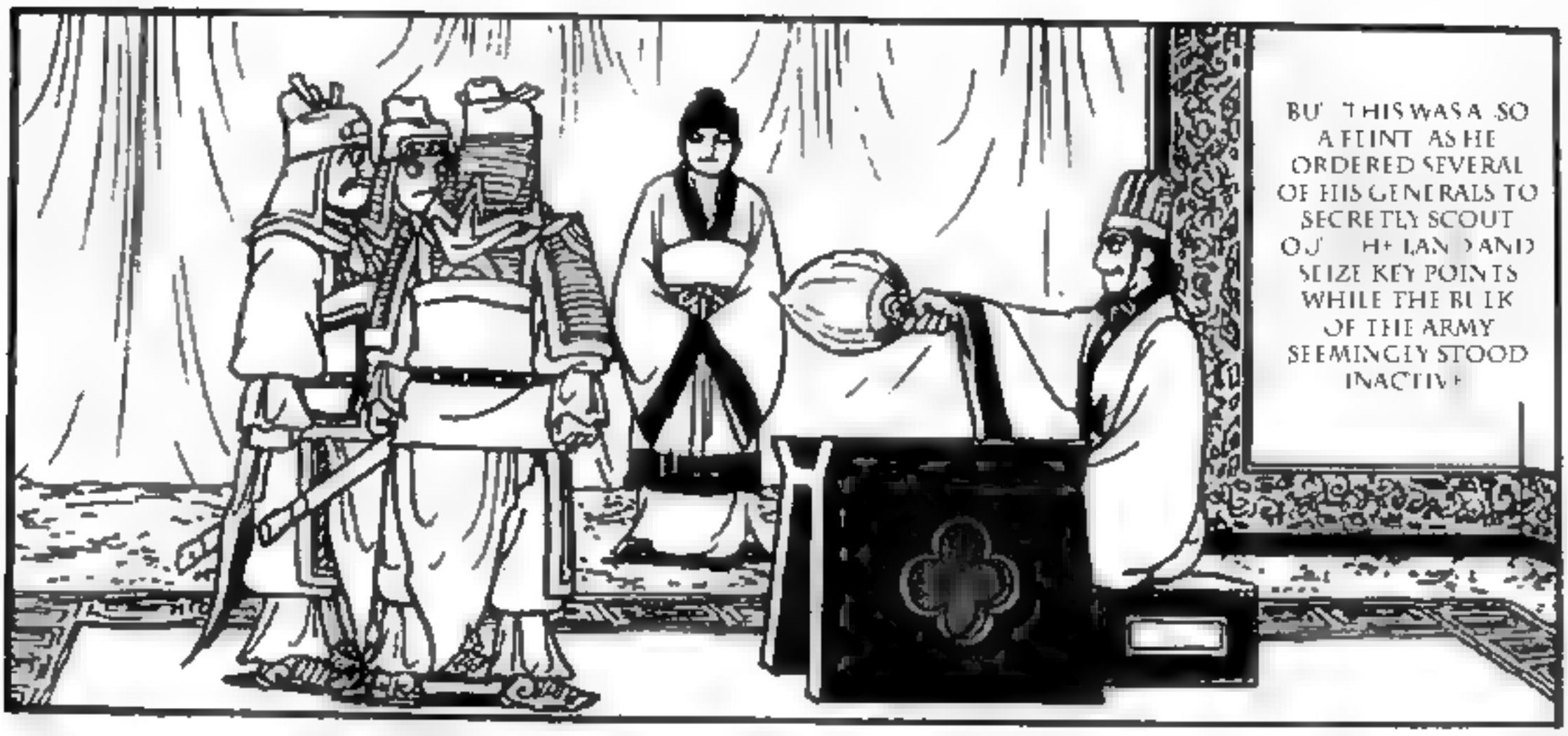
EVEN WITH MENG
JIE'S ADVICE THE
MARCH WAS NOT
EASY AT TIMES
WELLS OVER 60M
IN DEPTH NEEDED
TO BE DUG

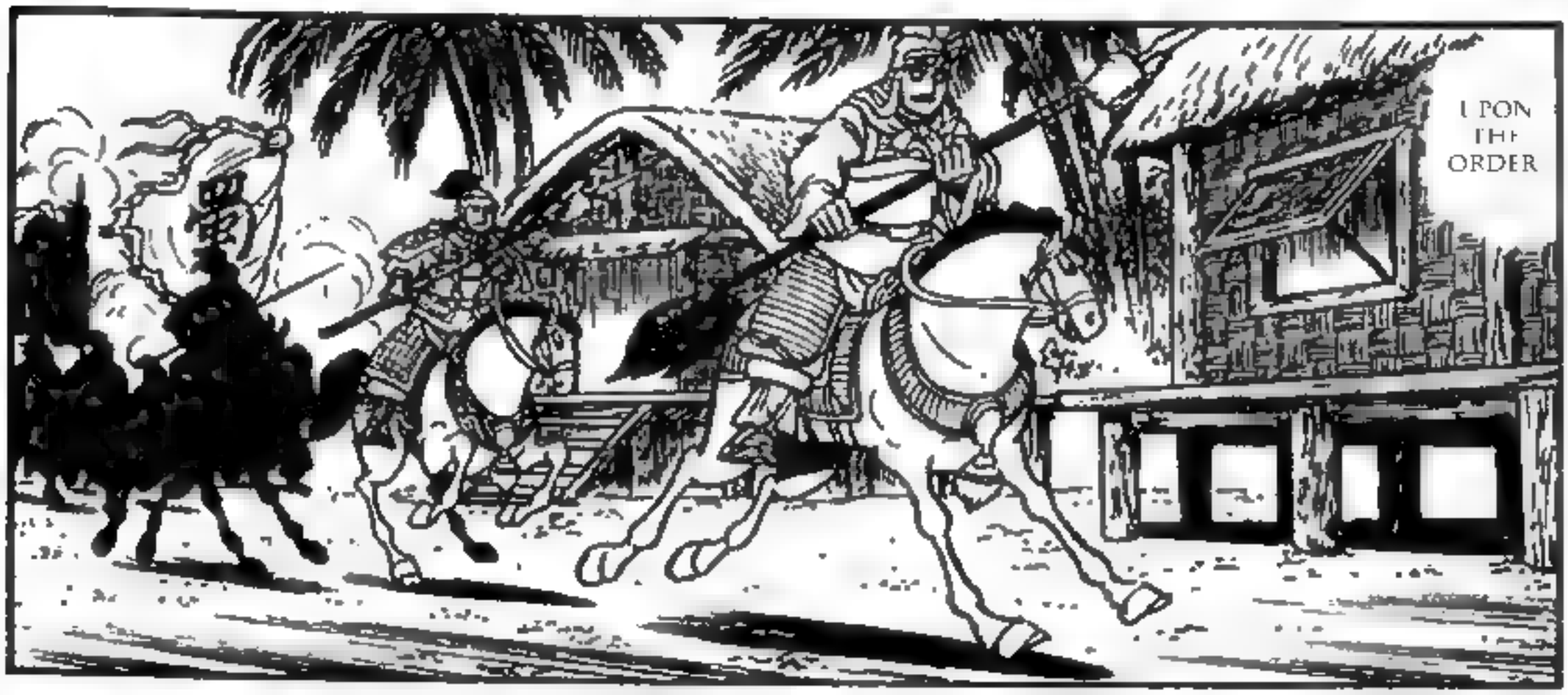
AT OTHER TIMES MEN CLIMBED DOWN PERILOUSLY STEEP CLIFFS TO FIND A RUNNING STREAM


IN ADDITION,
OVER 1000
BUCKETS
WERE MADE
TO STORE
WATER
DURING RAIN.
WHICH
THEN HAD
TO BE
CAREFULLY
HAULED BY
HORSES.


BUT AT LONG LAST, THEY REACHED LULONG RAVINE

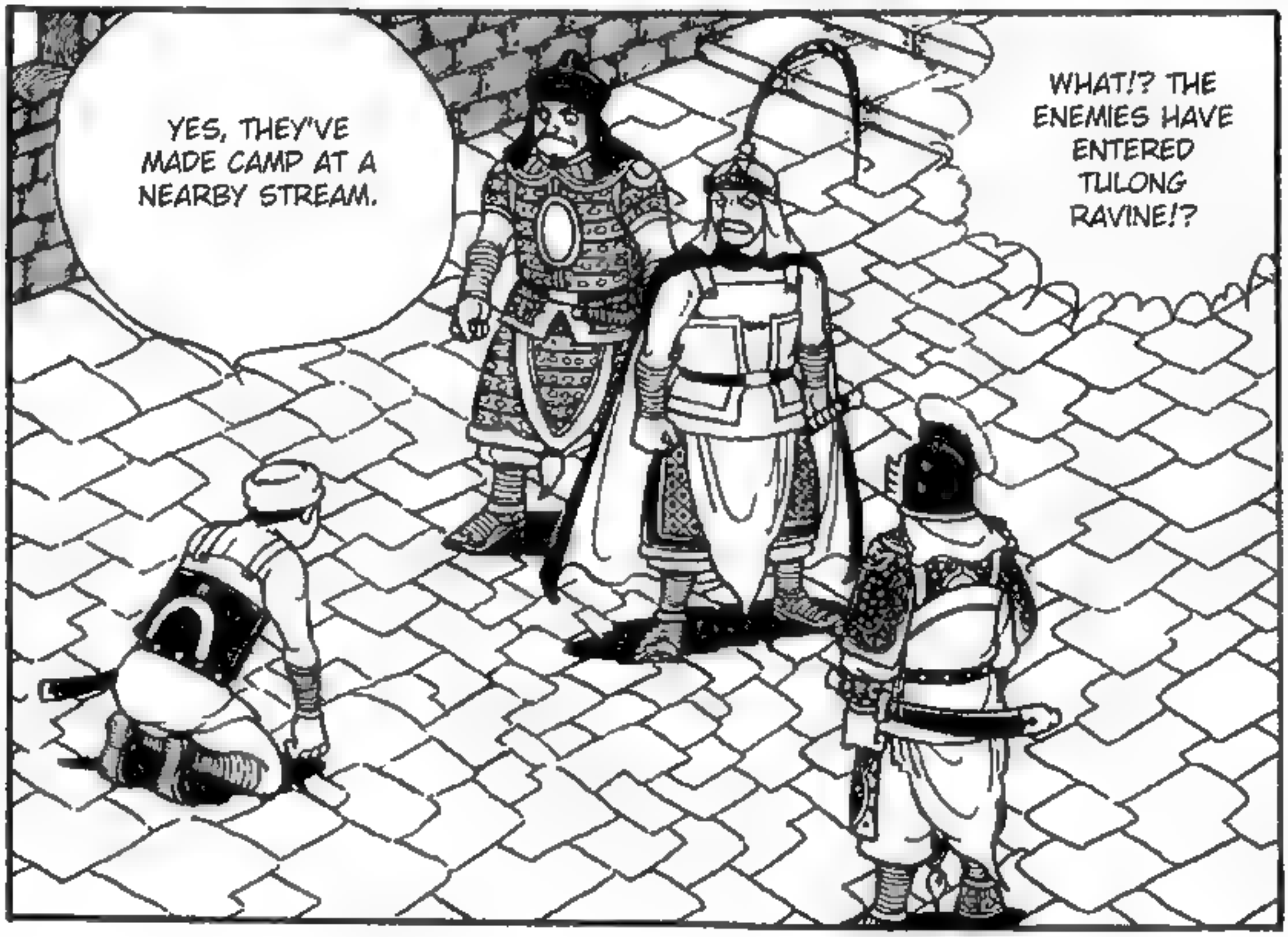

KONGMING IMMEDIATELY ORDERED THE CONSTRUCTION OF CAMP AND ALLOWED THE TROOPS A WELL DESERVED REST

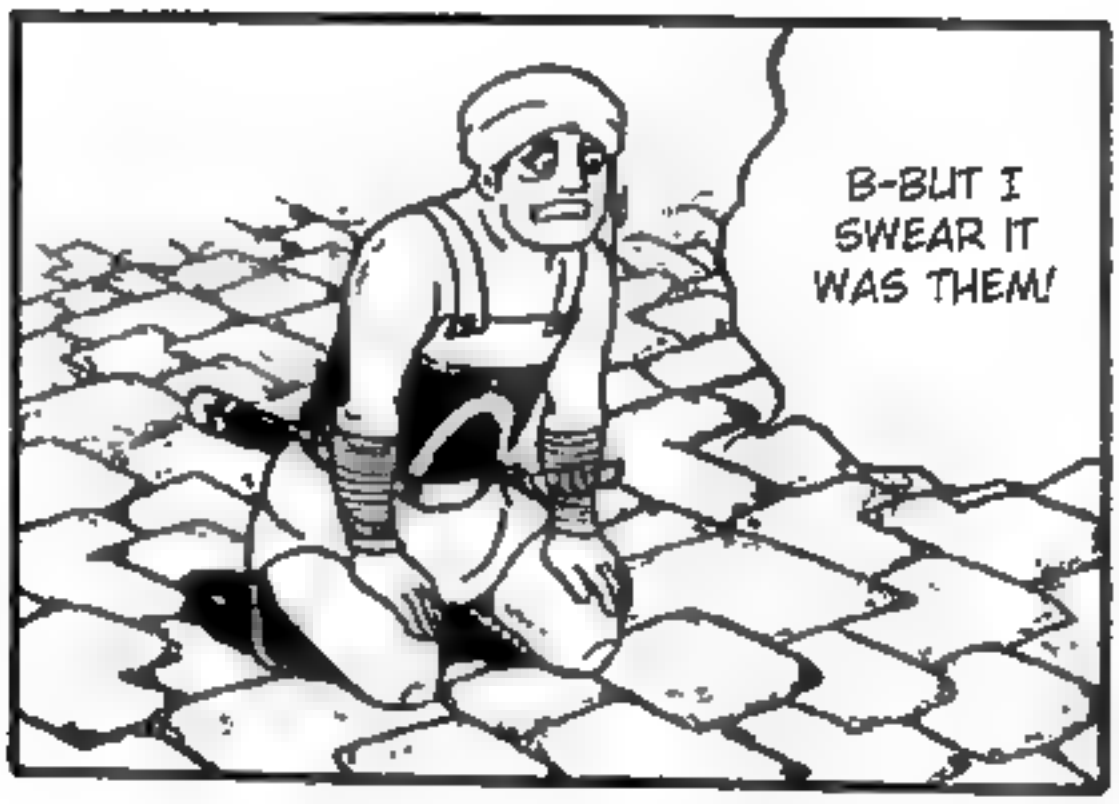

BUT THIS WAS A SO
A FEINT AS HE
ORDERED SEVERAL
OF HIS GENERALS TO
SECRETLY SCOUT
OUT THE LAND AND
SEIZE KEY POINTS
WHILE THE BULK
OF THE ARMY
SEEMINGLY STOOD
INACTIVE


UPON
THE
ORDER

SHU TROOPS
CAPTURED
SEVERAL
VILLAGES AND
THEIR CHIEFS

DANCE

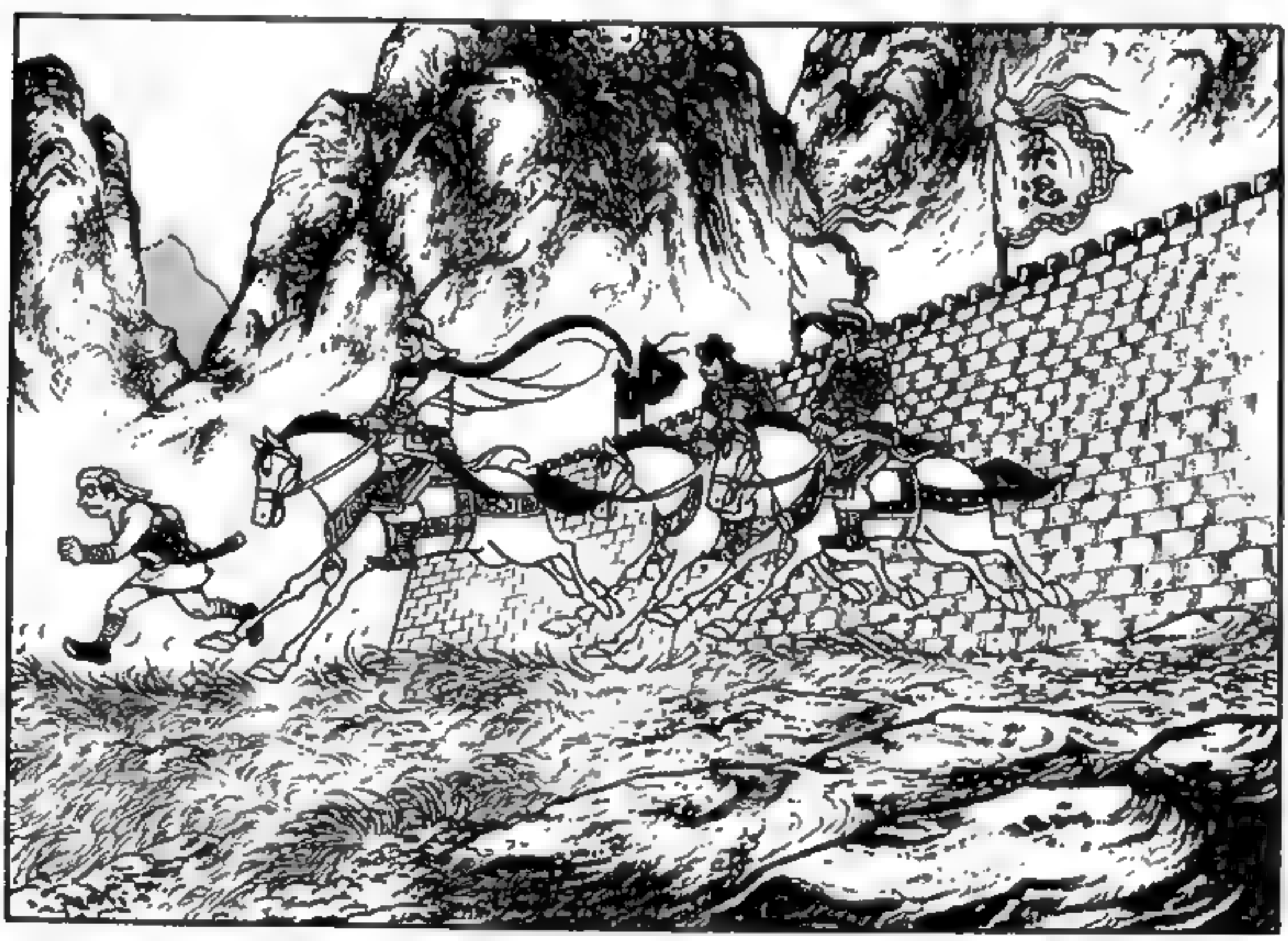

YES, THEY'VE MADE CAMP AT A NEARBY STREAM.
WHAT!? THE ENEMIES HAVE ENTERED TULONG RAVINE!?


B-BUT I SWEAR IT WAS THEM!

HAVE YOU GONE MAD!? DO YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THE ENEMIES COULD SIMPLY WALTZ INTO TULONG RAVINE!?

YES, SIR.

HMPH, I'LL BE THE JUDGE OF THAT! LEAD ME TO THE PLACE WHERE YOU SAW THEM.



THERE THEY ARE, SIR.

IS KONGMING THE DEVIL OR GOD...?

I-IT'S THEM...

WE MUST REFORM OUR STRATEGY AT ONCE.
I'M AFRAID TUJONG RAVINE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD BACK SUCH A LARGE FORCE INDEFINITELY...

NO! SURRENDER IS NOT AN OPTION!

AGAINST SUCH A LARGE FORCE, I FEAR OUR ONLY OPTIONS ARE ANNHILATION OR SURRENDER.

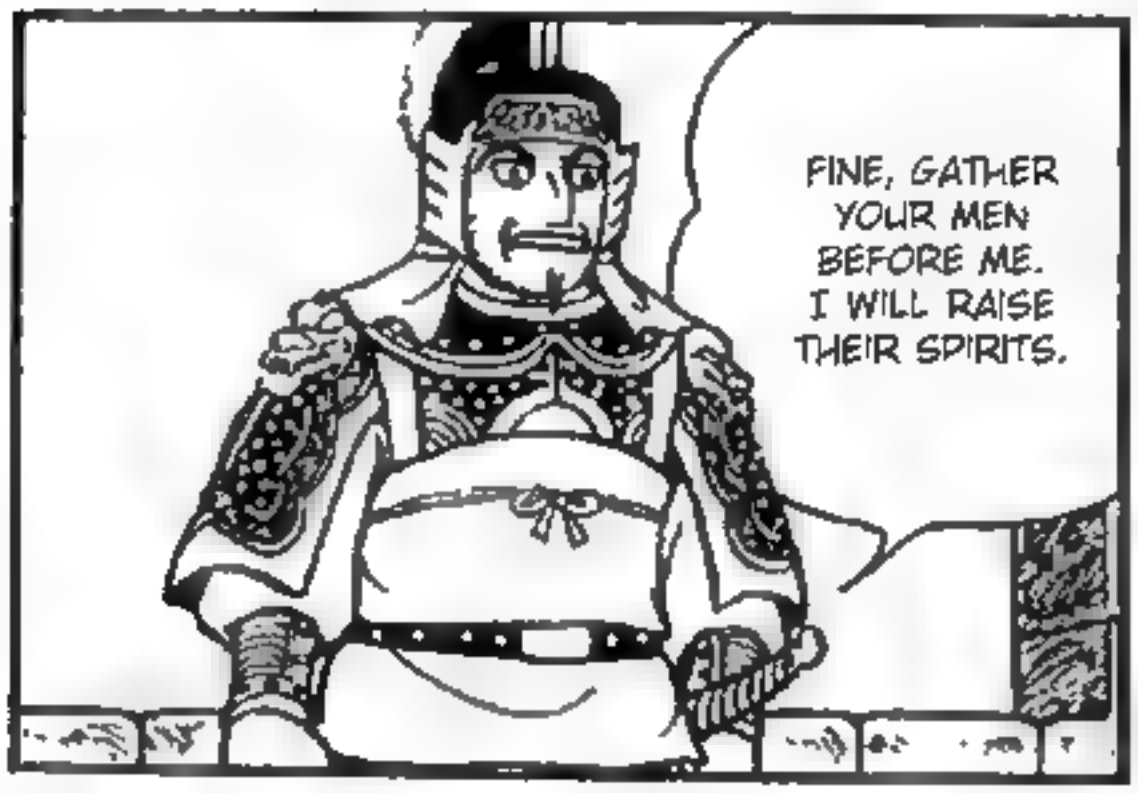
OF COURSE! VICTORY IS MOST CERTAINLY WITHIN REACH!

YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT FIGHTING THEM...!?

JUST THINK ABOUT THIS RATIONALLY. THE ENEMIES MAY HAVE MANAGED TO FIND THEIR WAY IN TULONG RAVINE, BUT YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW THAT IT WAS NO EASY JOURNEY. MANY OF THEM ARE LIKELY EXHAUSTED, SICK, OR WOUNDED.

IN ANY CASE, TO SUBMIT WITHOUT A FIGHT IS DEEPLY SHAMEFUL.

HMM...
OUR BRAVE NANMAN TROOPS WILL MAKE QUICK WORK OF THEIR TIRED SOLDIERS!


FINE, GATHER YOUR MEN BEFORE ME. I WILL RAISE THEIR SPIRITS.

I'M AFRAID MY MEN MAY HAVE BEEN DEMORALIZED ALREADY AT THE SIGHT OF SUCH OVERWHELMING NUMBERS.

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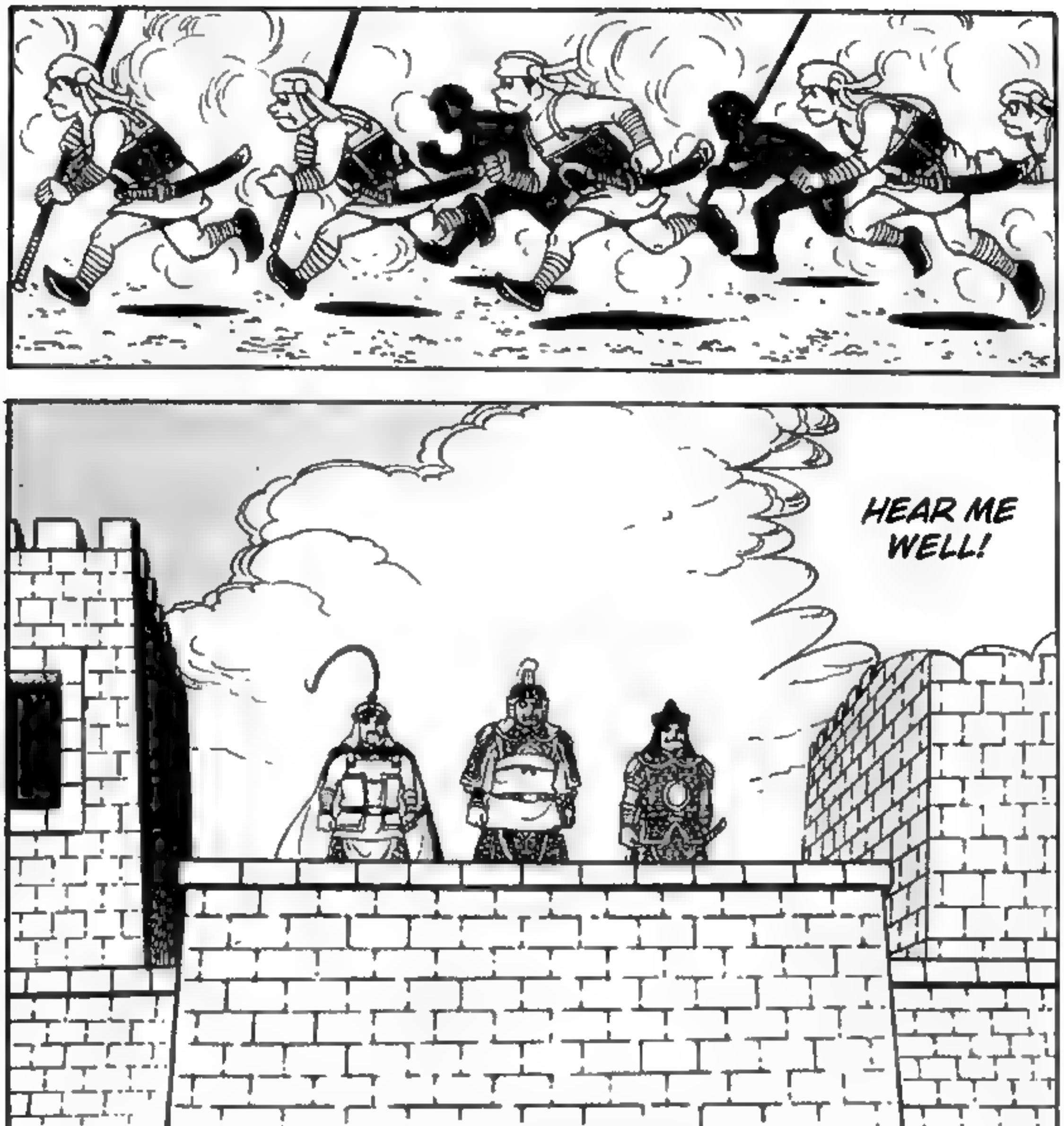

HEAR ME WELL!

BUT FRET NOT, FOR THEY ARE WEARY AND SICK FROM THEIR PERILOUS JOURNEY HERE!

HAN SOLDIERS HAVE CREEPED ALL THE WAY TO THIS RAVINE!

DOES THAT MEAN WE CAN KEEP ALL THE LOOT!?

THE FOREIGNERS DID NOT COME EMPTY-HANDED. THEY HAVE BROUGHT WAGONS AND WAGONS FILLED WITH THE FINEST ARMS, ARMOUR, SILK, PRECIOUS METALS, AND FOOD! ALL THESE RICHES WILL BE YOURS AS LONG AS YOU HAVE THE COURAGE TO PRY IT FROM THEIR HANDS!

THAT'S RIGHT! THEIR TREASURES ARE YOURS TO TAKE!

SEE HOW THE GLINT IN THEIR EYES CHANGED, DUO SI? THEY'LL DO JUST FINE.
SIR!

YANG FENG HAS COME TO SUPPORT US!?

CHIEF YANG FENG OF THE NEIGHBOURING RAVINES HAS COME AT THE HEAD OF A 30,000 STRONG ARMY TO SUPPORT US.

YES, YOU'RE RIGHT. THE INDEPENDENCE OF ALL NANMAN TRIBES IS AT STAKE.

HE MUST HAVE COME, KNOWING THAT HIS LANDS WOULD BE NEXT IF TULONG RAVINE FELL. WHAT DID I TELL YOU BEFORE? VICTORY IS SURELY WITHIN OUR REACH!

HAHA, YES.

HAHAHA! LET US GO WELCOME OUR HONOURED GUEST!

YOUR CONCERNS ARE MY CONCERNS. IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT I OFFER MY HELP.

YANG FENG, IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU!

THESE ARE MY 5 SONS. THEY ARE ALL SKILLED IN THE WAYS OF WAR. THEY WILL BE OF GREAT HELP.

HAHAHA, THIS BATTLE IS NOW AS GOOD AS WON, YOU'LL SEE!

YES, I'M SURE THEY WILL BE OF MUCH HELP.

LET US CELE-BRATE WITH A FEAST TONIGHT!

OH, I'M DRINKING PLENTY.

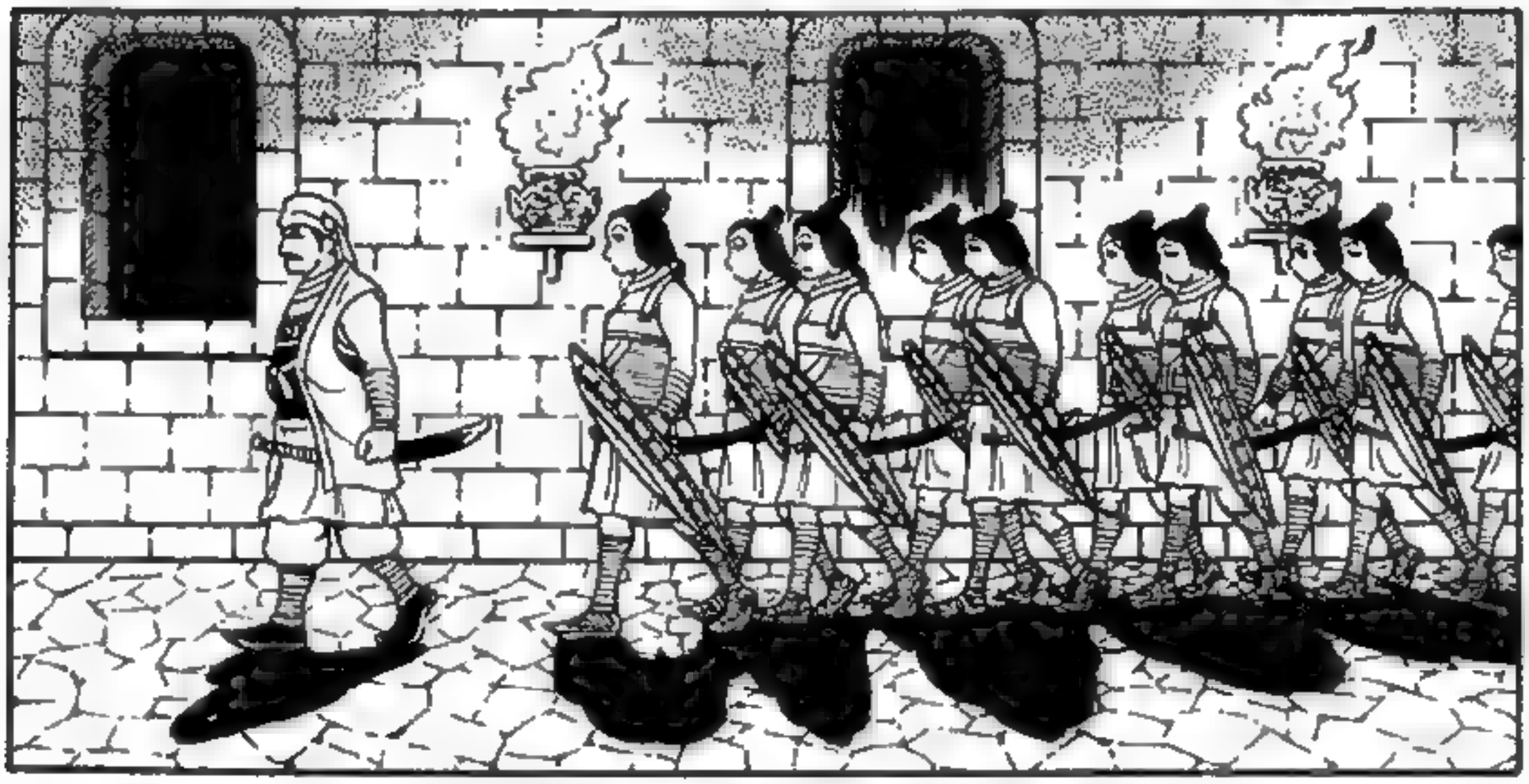
DRINK, DRINK!

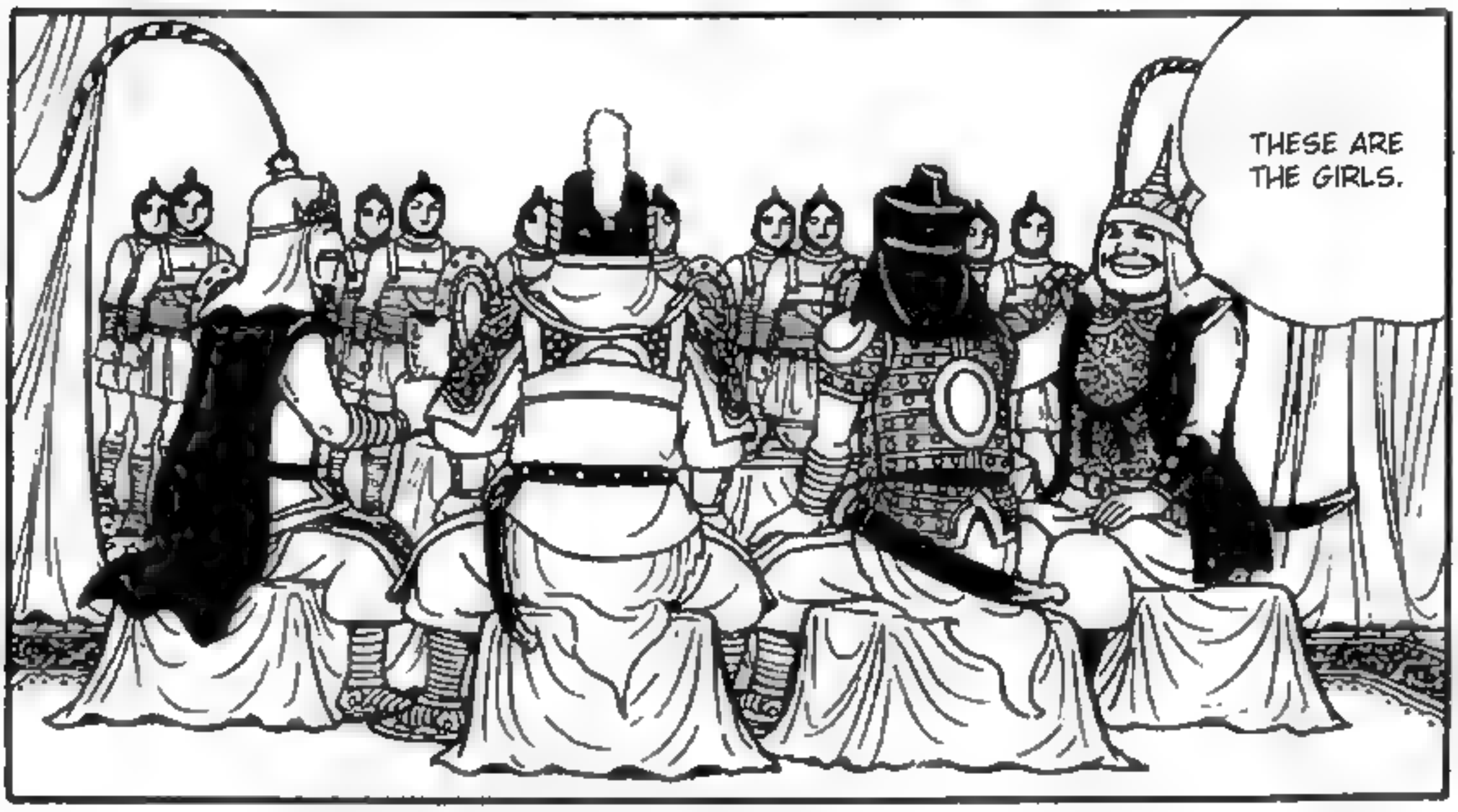
SURE, SOUNDS INTERESTING.

BY THE WAY, I HAVE BROUGHT ALONG DANCING GIRLS WHO'VE BEEN TAUGHT SWORDSMANSHIP AND COMBAT FOR ENTERTAINMENT ON A CAMPAIGN. WOULD YOU CARE TO SEE THEIR DANCE?

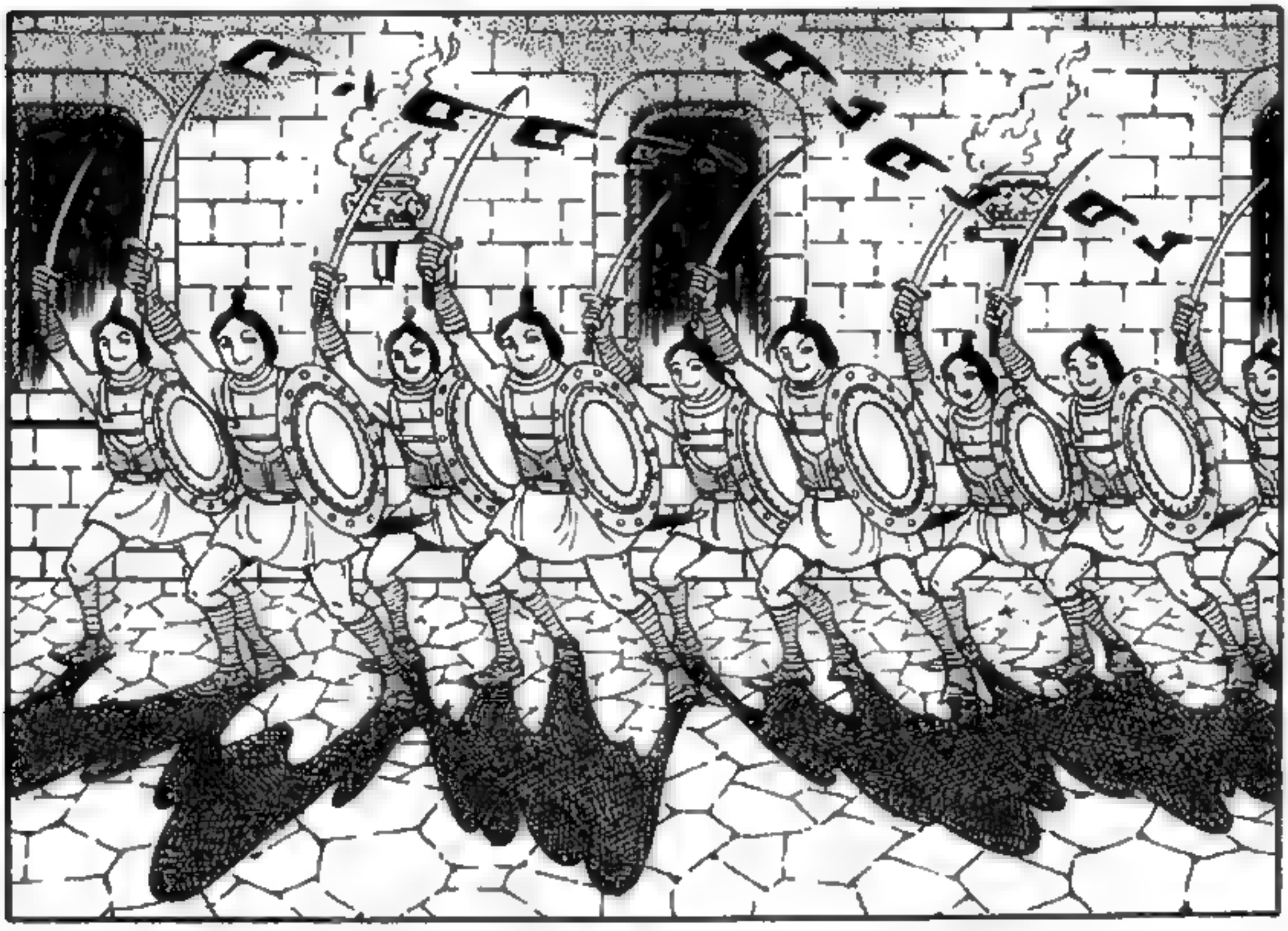
YES, SIR.

BRING THE DANCING WARRIORS.



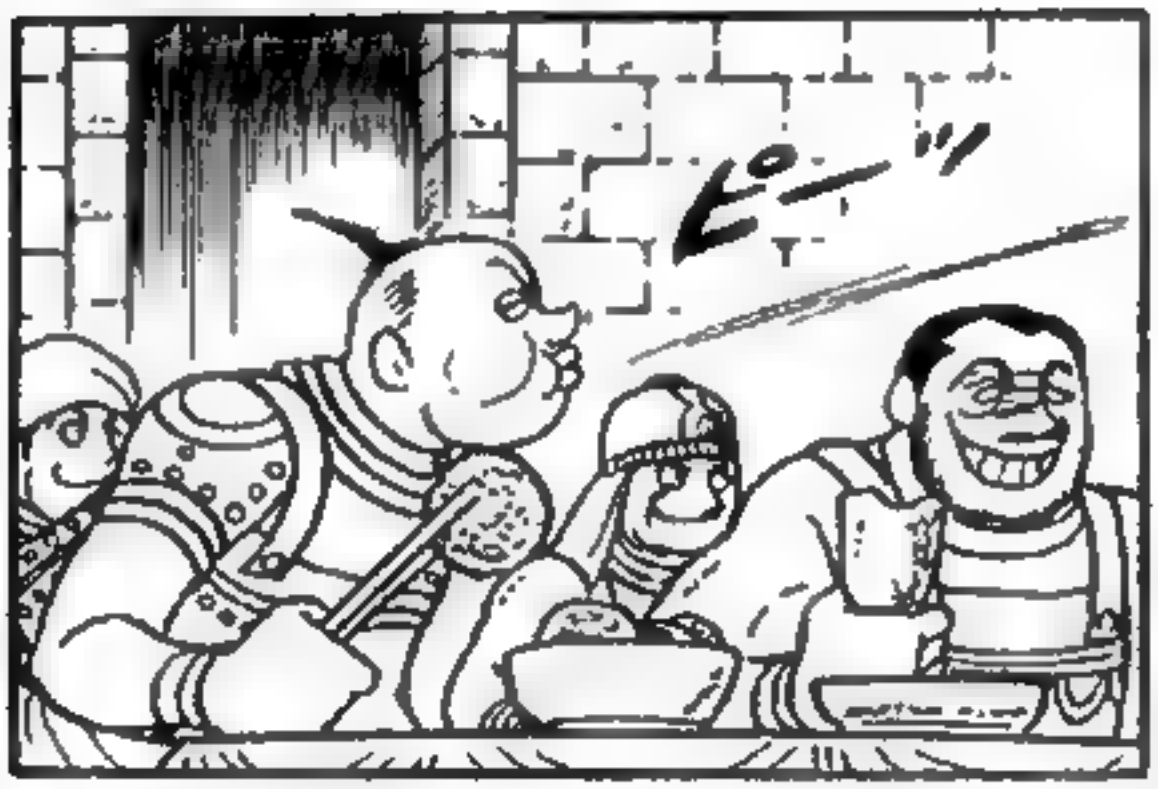

THESE ARE THE GIRLS.

SHOW THEM YOUR DANCING!



AHH, THEY'RE ALL GREAT BEAUTIES!

HAHAHA! SPLENDID, SPLENDID!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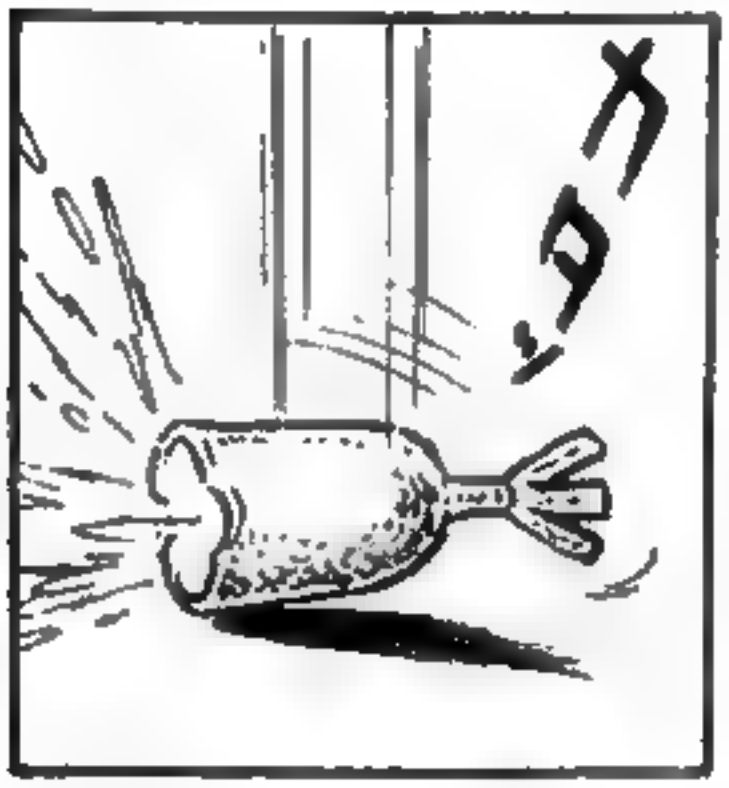
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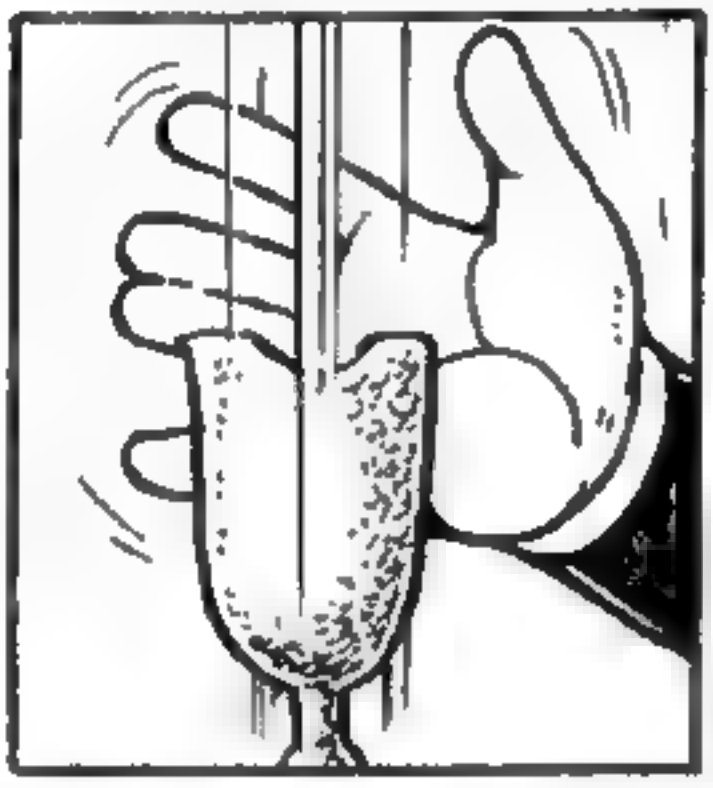
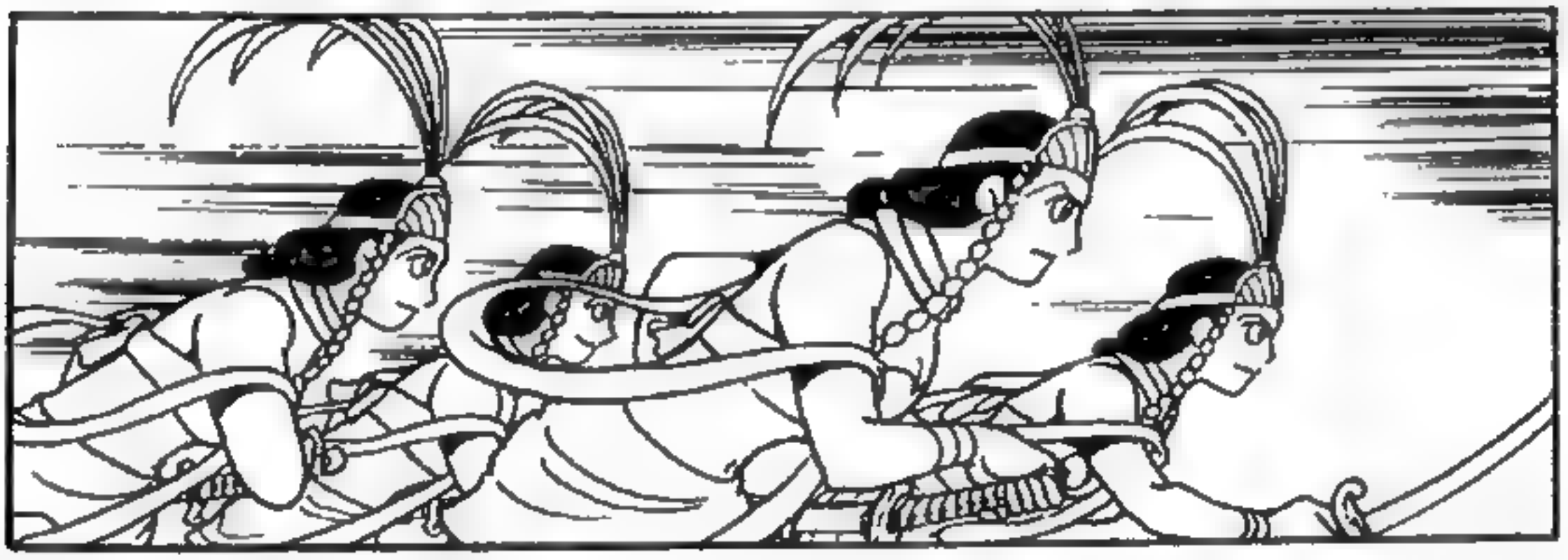


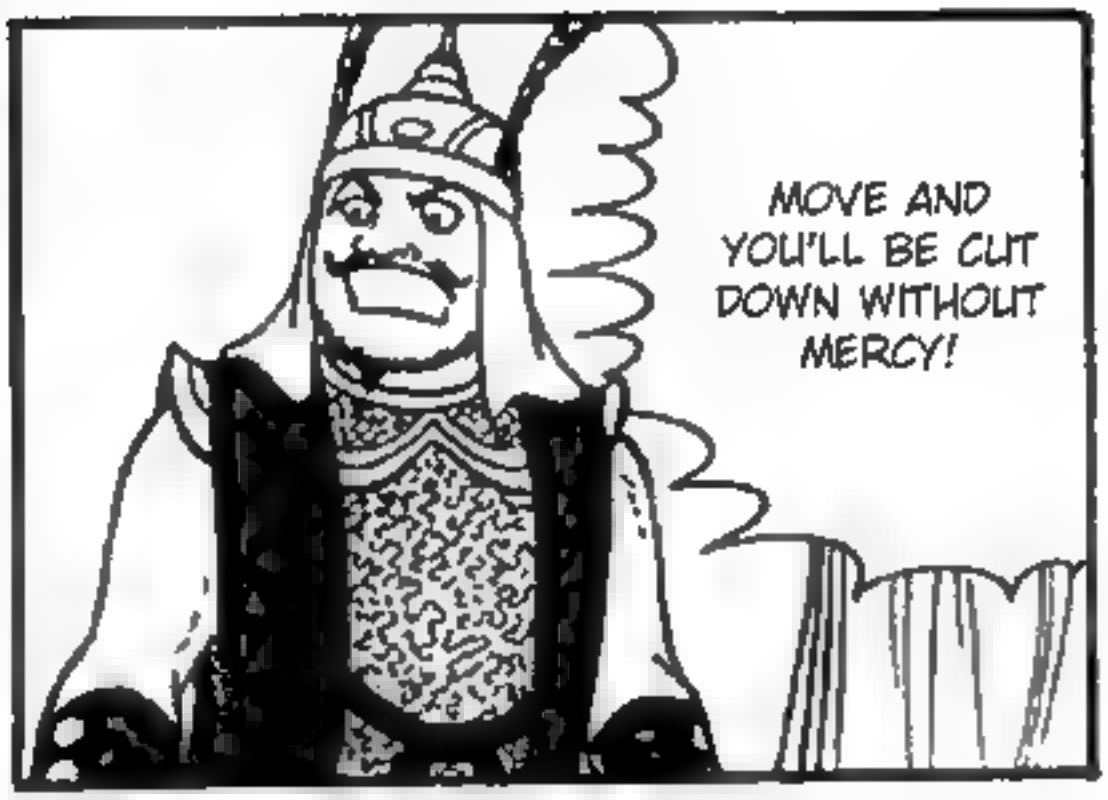


AHH!

?
HM?

AHH!

HM?


MOVE AND YOU'LL BE CUT DOWN WITHOUT MERCY!

ALL THE LOCAL CHIEFS AROUND TULONG RAVINE HAVE ALREADY BEEN CAPTURED BY KONGMING.

YANG FENG! ARE YOU NOT ONE OF US!? WHY HAVE YOU BETRAYED US!?

BUT KONGMING PARDONED AND RELEASED ALL OF US. TO REPAY THAT DEBT, I PLANNED ALL THIS.

WHAT!

WHAT!?

THESE 5 SONS OF MINE ALL ACTUALLY WORK FOR KONGMING.

MENG HUO, YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR KONGMING. WHY DON'T YOU JUST SURRENDER ALREADY?

DAMN IT!

SHUT UP! I'D RATHER DIE THAN SURRENDER!

CURSE MY ILL FORTUNES!

AH!

DON'T ACT SO UNSIGHTLY, MENG HUO.

THE REST OF YOUR TROOPS HAVE ALREADY FLED AT THE SUDDEN SIGHT OF MY ARMY.

I WAS OUTSIDE THE CITY AND WAITING FOR THE SMOKE SIGNAL BEFORE COMING INSIDE.

KONGMING!? WHEN DID YOU...!?

WHEN DID I EVER LOSE TO YOU!? I WAS TREACHER-OUSLY BETRAYED THIS TIME! I WAS NOT CAPTURED BY YOUR HANDS!

NOW DID YOU NOT SAY THAT YOU WOULD SUBMIT IF YOU LOST ONE MORE TIME? WELL, WILL YOU?

ENOUGH OF YOUR PRETTY WORDS, YOU CUR WHO KNOWS ONLY OF DECEPTION!

IF YOU WERE BETRAYED BY ONE OF YOUR CHIEFS, HOW CAN YOU STILL CALL YOURSELF THE NANMAN KING?

MY SILVER PIT RAVINE IS DEFENDED BY 3 GREAT RIVERS AND LEGIONS OF BRAVE MEN! IF YOU CAN BEAT ME THERE, I WILL ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR SUPERIORITY AND SUBMIT! BUT I WILL NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THIS CHEAP AND UNFAIR USE OF TREACHERY HERE WHICH YOU CALL A VICTORY!

STILL STUBBORN AS EVER...

IF YOU CAN'T ACCEPT THAT, THEN GO AHEAD AND KILL ME!

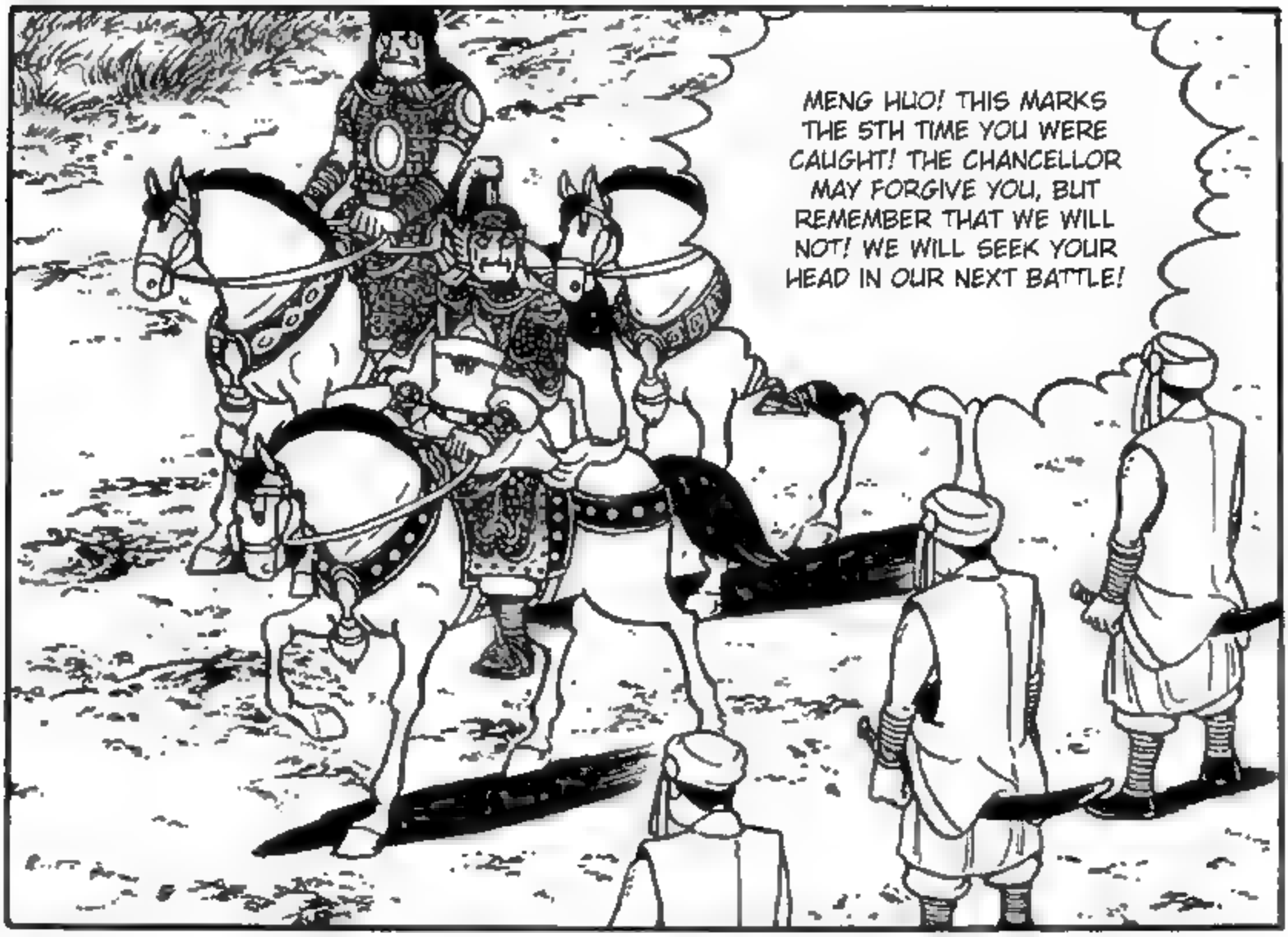
VERY WELL, I WILL FIGHT YOU ONCE MORE.

YES, SIR.

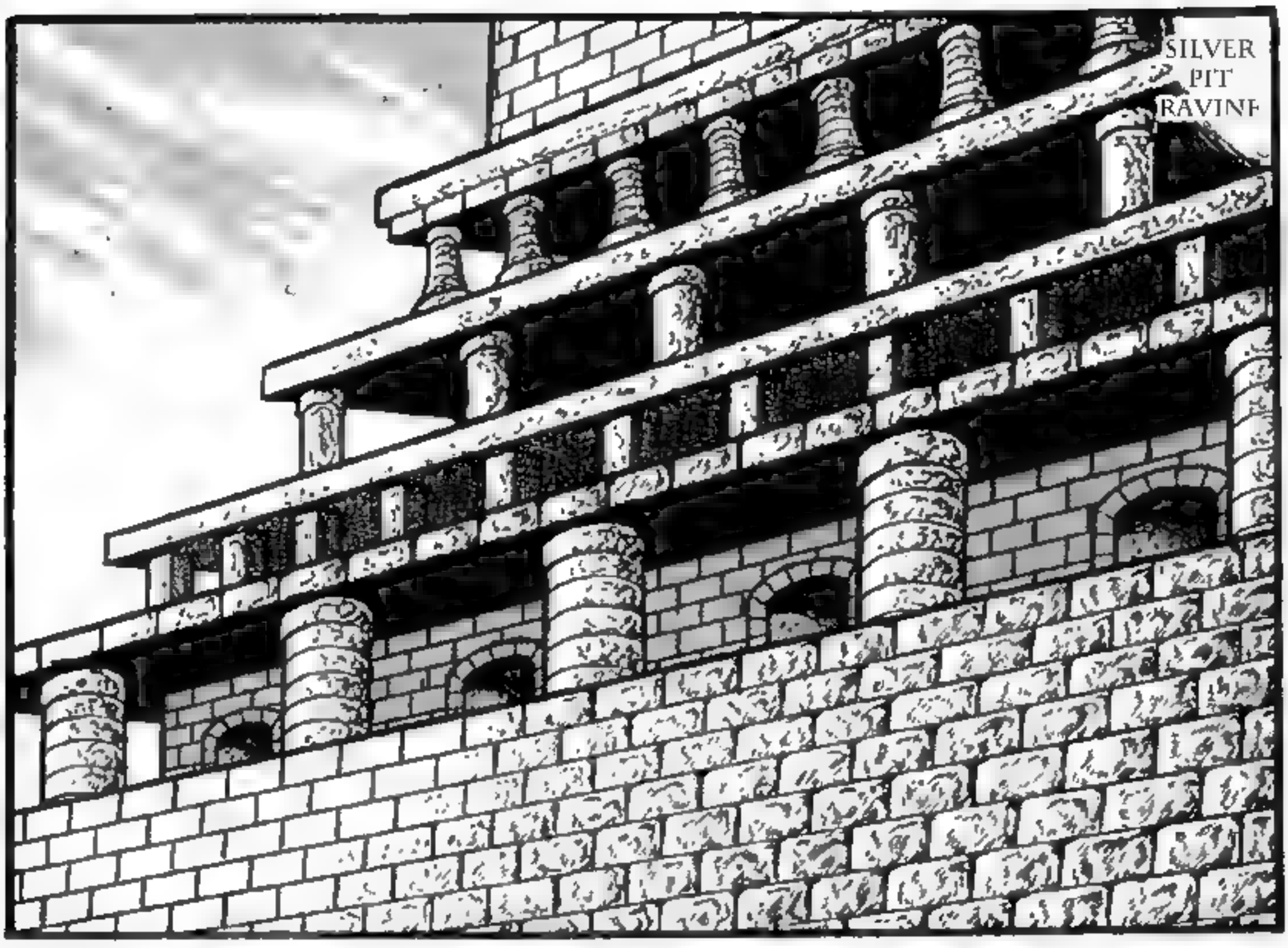
GIVE THESE MEN A HORSE TO RIDE AWAY FROM HERE.

BUT I WARN YOU THAT YOUR FAMILY AND 9 TRIBES MAY BE ANNHILATED IN THE COURSE OF THIS WAR.

COME!


MENG HUO! THIS MARKS THE 5TH TIME YOU WERE CAUGHT! THE CHANCELLOR MAY FORGIVE YOU, BUT REMEMBER THAT WE WILL NOT! WE WILL SEEK YOUR HEAD IN OUR NEXT BATTLE!

THUS WAS MENG HUO RELEASED FOR THE 5TH TIME.


SILVER
PIT
RAVINE

NEWS OF MENG
HUO'S DEFEAT AND
RETREAT SPREAD
LIKE WILDFIRE ALL
THE WAY BACK TO
HIS CAPITAL AT
SILVER PIT RAVINE

ALL THE STILL-LOYAL CHIEFS GATHERED TO FORM A STRATEGY BUT NO AGREEMENT WAS REACHED

BRING ME SOME WINE!

MY KING, HOW ABOUT WE ASK KING MU LU OF BANA RAVINE FOR HELP?

DAMN IT, ALL THAT BICKERING AND NOT A SINGLE GOOD IDEA TO SHOW FOR IT!

BUT I'M SURE IF YOU EXPLAINED THE THREAT THE FOREIGN-ERS POSE, HE'LL AGREE...

YOU KNOW HE AND I AREN'T ON GOOD TERMS.

WHAT!?

TRUE, IF I CAN MAKE HIM AN ALLY, HE WILL BE A POWERFUL ONE INDEED. THE PROBLEM IS IF...

HMM...

MOREOVER, HE'LL BE A POWERFUL ALLY, WITH HIS 30,000 ELITE TROOPS AND HIS ABILITY TO COMMAND WILD BEASTS.

HMM...

IT CAN BE DONE IF WE SEND HIM GIFTS AS A SIGN OF DEFERENCE AND REMIND HIM THAT ALL OF OUR INDEPEND-ENCE IS AT STAKE.

THUS, MENG HUO SENT A REQUEST FOR AID FARTHER OUT WEST TO KING MU LU OF BANA RAVINE (PERHAPS SOMEWHERE NEAR MODERN-DAY VIETNAM, MYANMAR, OR THAILAND)

KING MU LU WAS A POWERFUL WARRIOR WHO RODE TO BATTLE ON A WAR ELEPHANT AND KNOWN TO USE TIGERS, LEOPARDS, WOLVES, AND VENOMOUS VIPERS IN HIS ARMIES. THESE DEADLY BEASTS AND HIS 30,000 CRACK TROOPS MADE HIM A FORCE TO RECKON WITH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

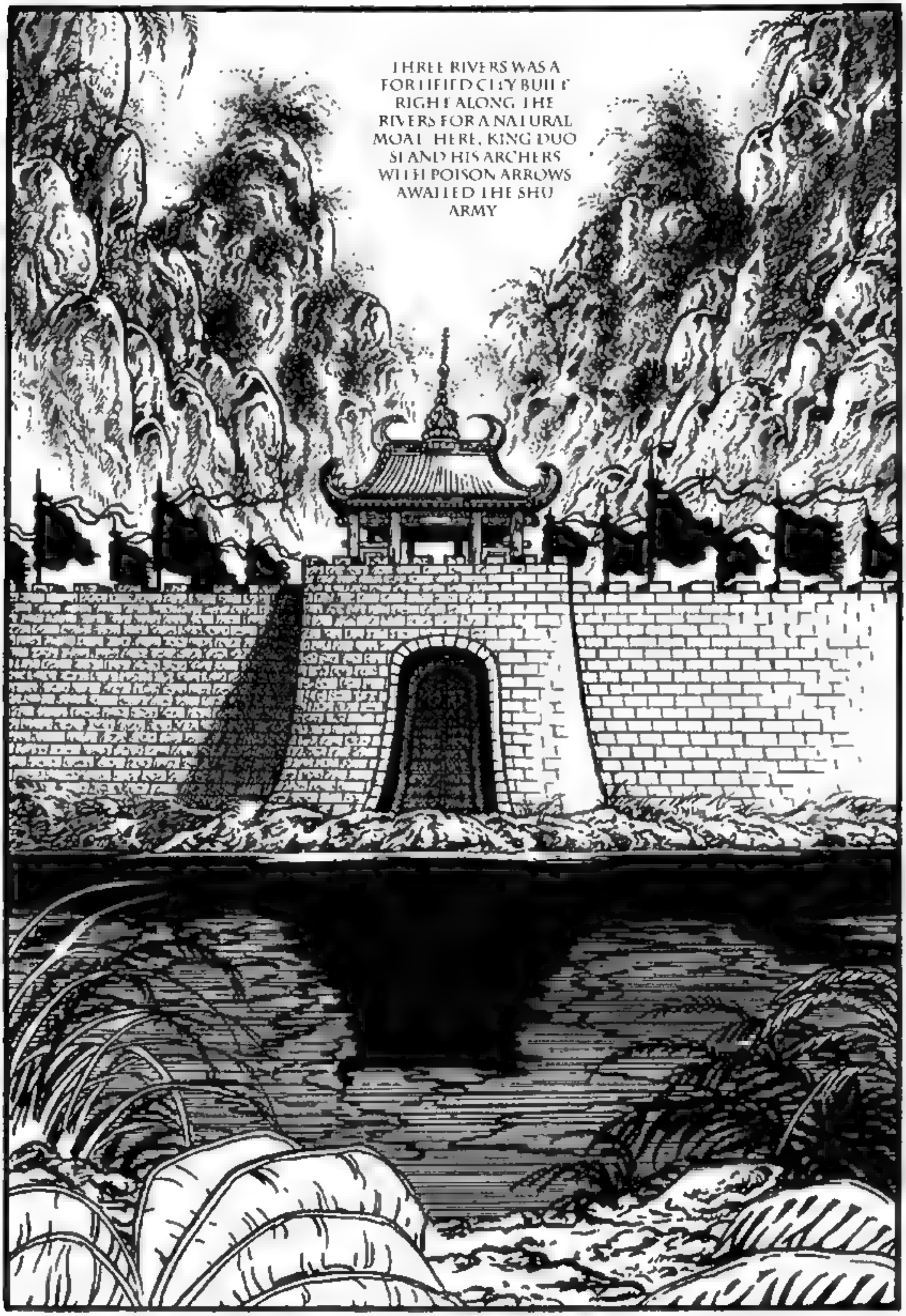
YES?

DUO SI.

OF COURSE.

I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU TO WATCH OVER THE DEFENSE OF THREE RIVERS. IT IS A CITY OF GREAT STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE AND WILL BE ABLE TO HOLD OUT AGAINST MOST ENEMY ATTACKS.

KING DUO SI HURRIED OVER TO COMMAND THE CITY'S DEFENSE


THREE RIVERS WAS A
FORTIFIED CITY BUILT
RIGHT ALONG THE
RIVERS FOR A NATURAL
MOAT. HERE, KING DUO
SI AND HIS ARCHERS
WITH POISON ARROWS
AWAITED THE SHU
ARMY

SHOWER OF POISON ARROWS

HM...

THAT IS THREE RIVERS, THE FRONT-LINE CITY GUARDING THE ADVANCE TO SILVER PIT RAVINE.

LEAD AN ATTACK TO PROBE ITS DEFENSES. IF IT PROVES TOO TOUGH, WITHDRAW.

YES, SIR.

YES?

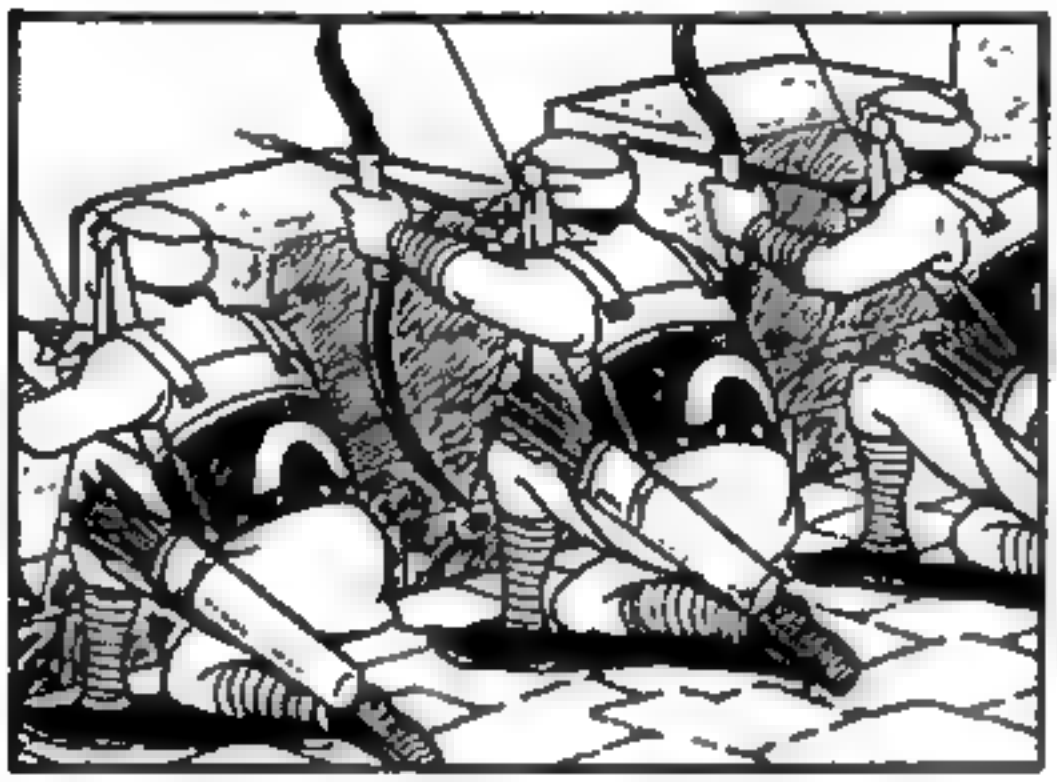
ZHAO ZILONG! WEI YAN!

COME, MEN! LET'S NOT LET OUR COMRADES LED BY ZHAO ZILONG OUTDO US!

IT'S TIME TO ATTACK! THAT SMALL CITY WILL BE OURS IN NO TIME!

SHOOT ON MY SIGNAL!

DON'T PANIC. OUR ARCHERS WILL SHOOT ONCE THEY BEGIN CROSSING THE MOAT.
HERE THEY COME, SIR.

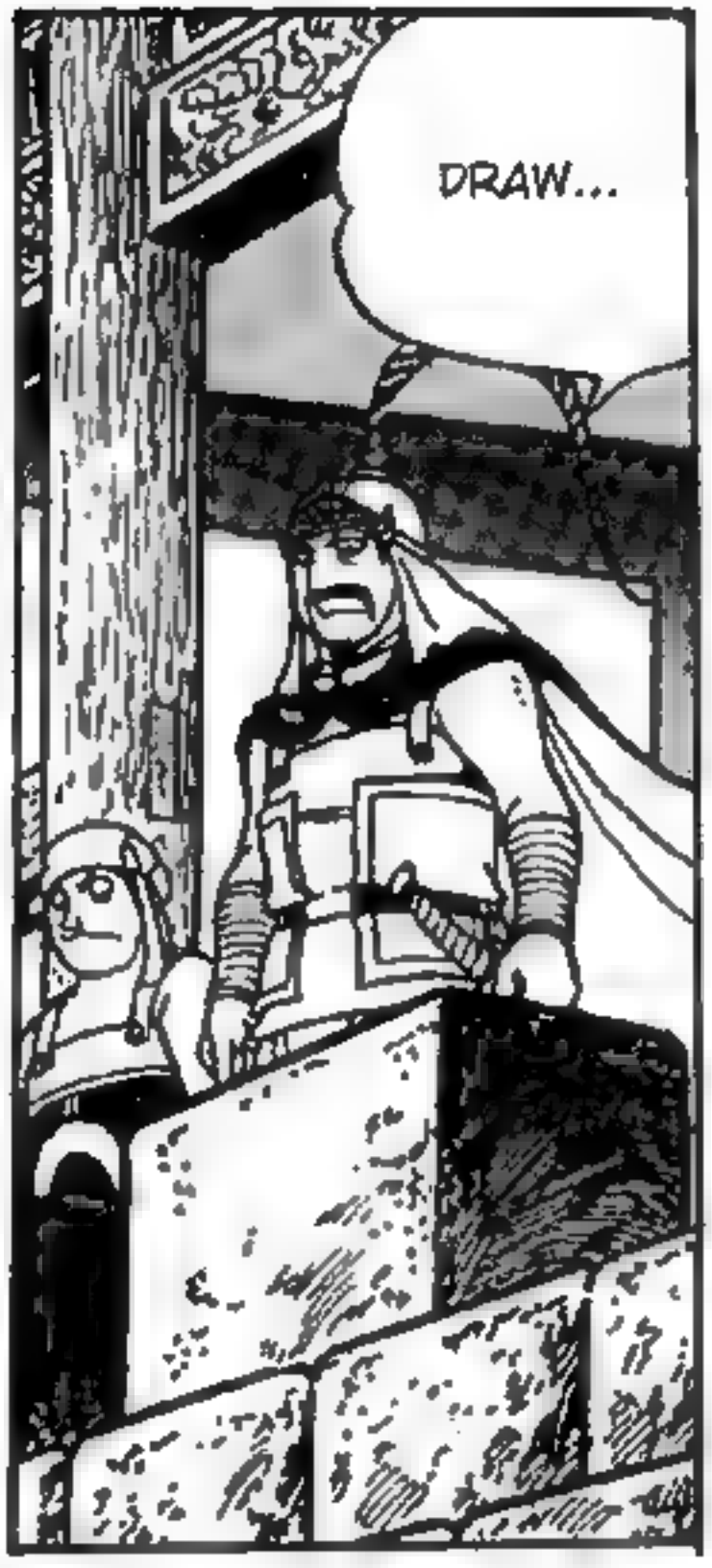


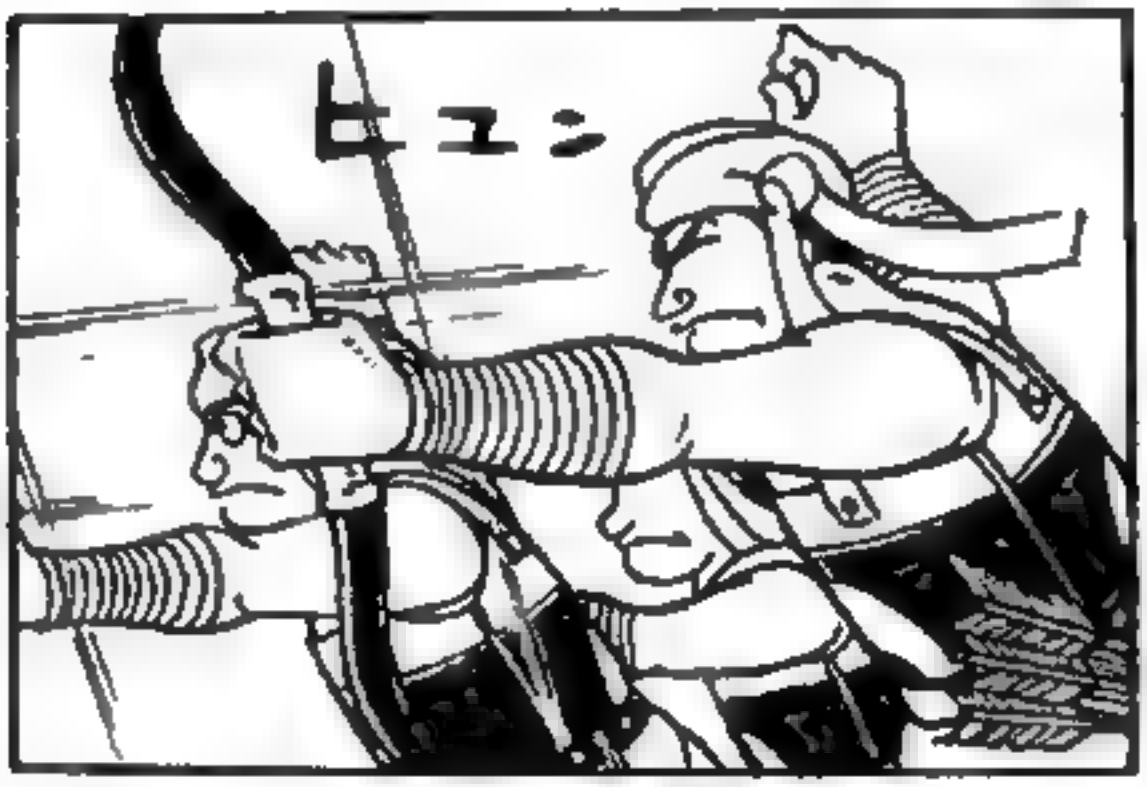
CHECK THE MOAT'S DEPTH!

IT'S SHALLOW ENOUGH FOR US TO WADE THROUGH, GENERAL!

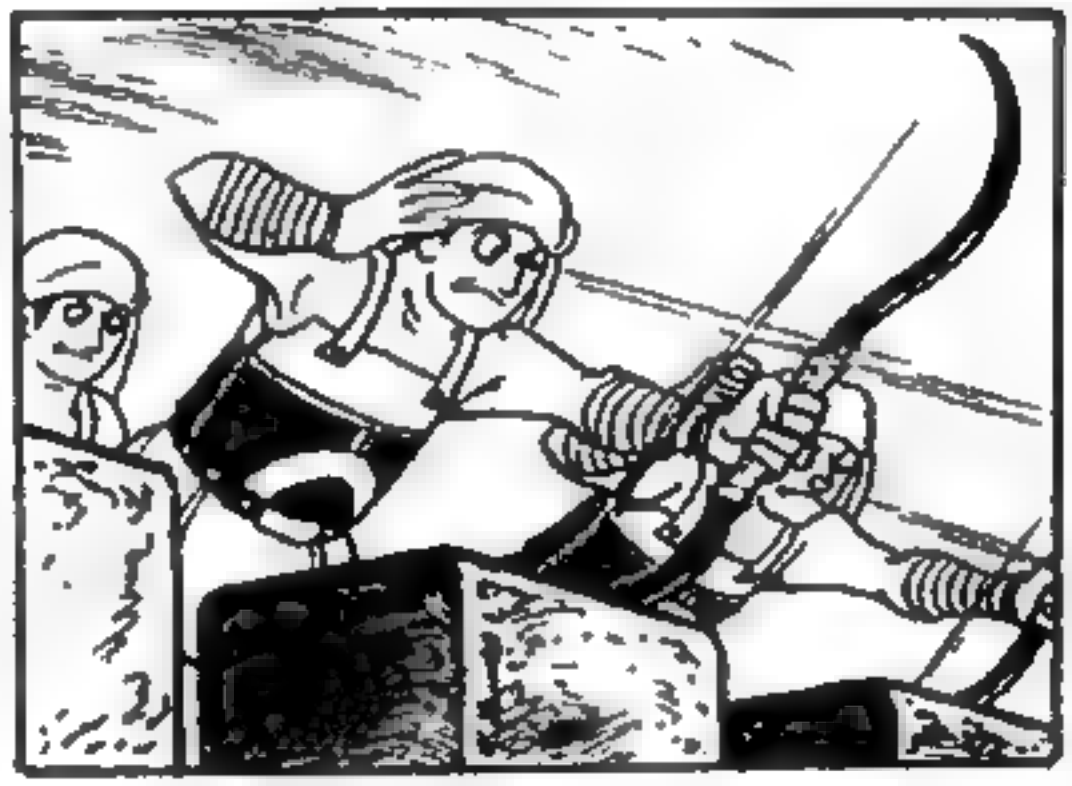
THEN LET'S STORM INTO THE CITY!

魏延
蜀


DRAW...


ヒュン

NOW
SHOOT!



AGHH!

UGH!

AHH!

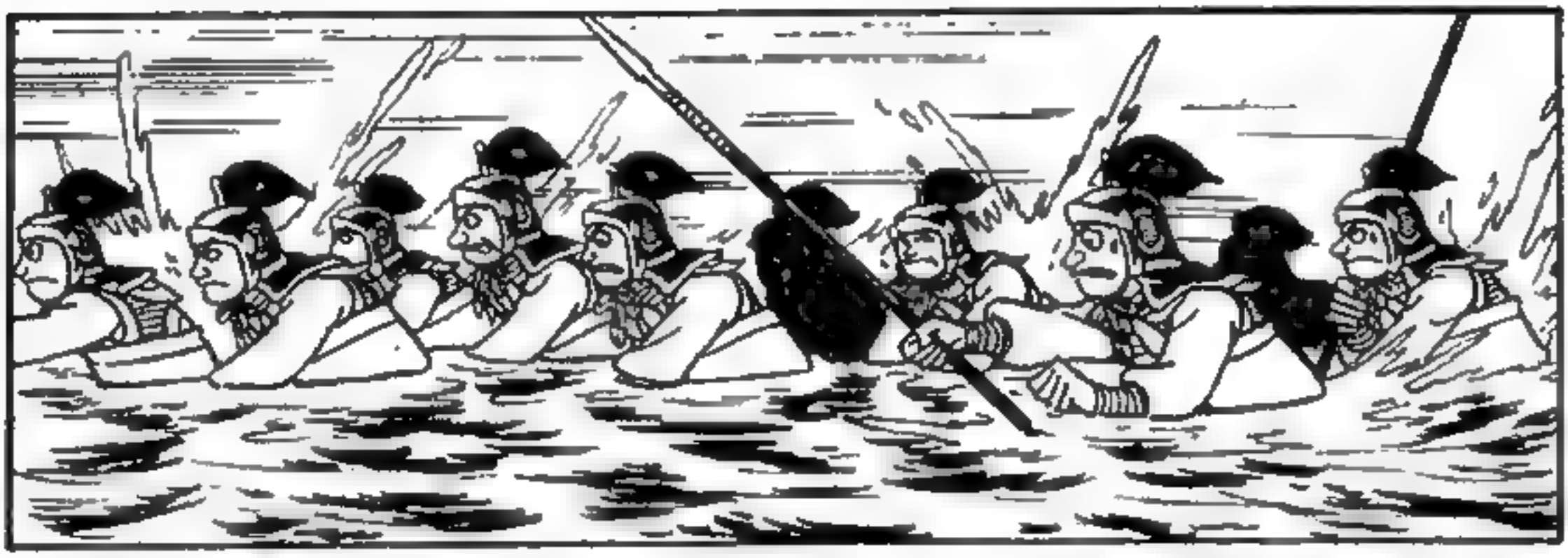
DO NOT FALTER! THE WALLS ARE JUST BEFORE US!

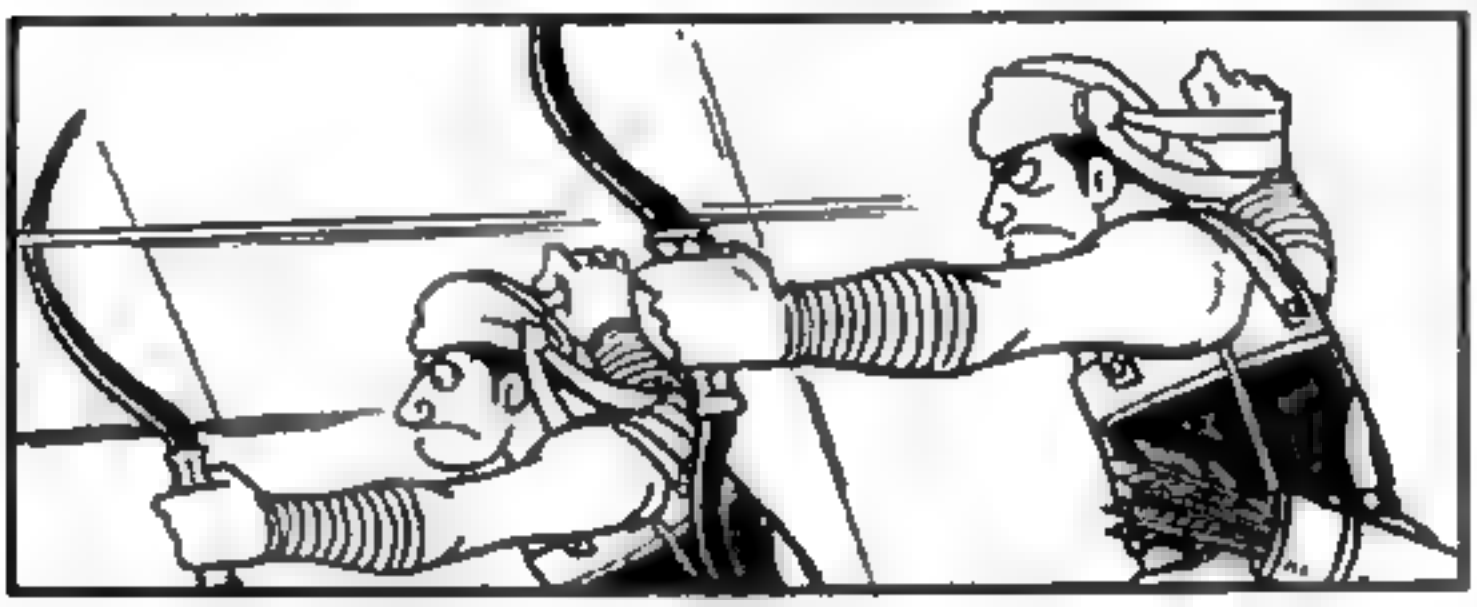
NGHH!

I... I CAN'T MOVE MY... BODY...

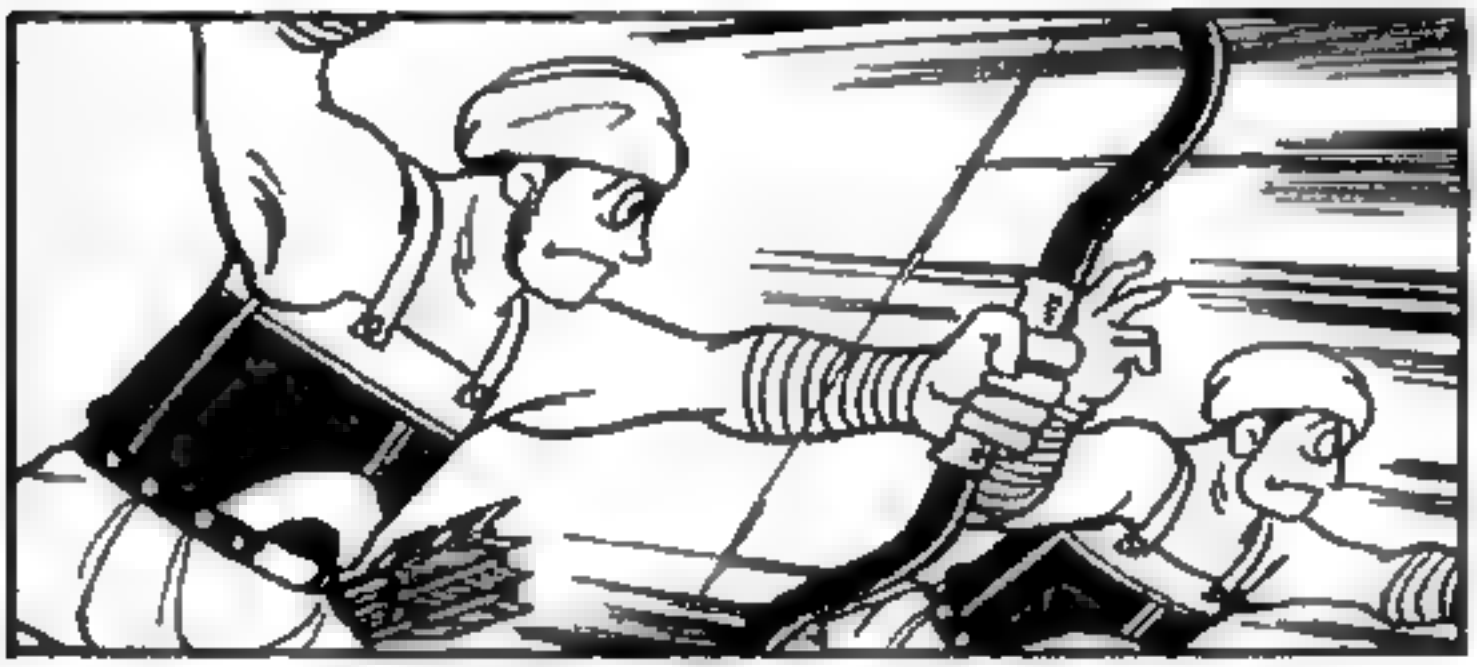
GENERAL, THESE ARE POISON ARROWS!

CHANGE OF PLANS! WITHDRAW TO WHERE THEIR ARROWS CAN'T REACH US!





LOOK, THE ENEMIES ARE IN PANIC! KEEP SHOOTING!



COME IF YOU DARE, FOREIGNERS OF SHU! WE WILL SHOWER YOU WITH A RAIN OF POISON ARROWS!

ALRIGHT, CEASE SHOOTING.

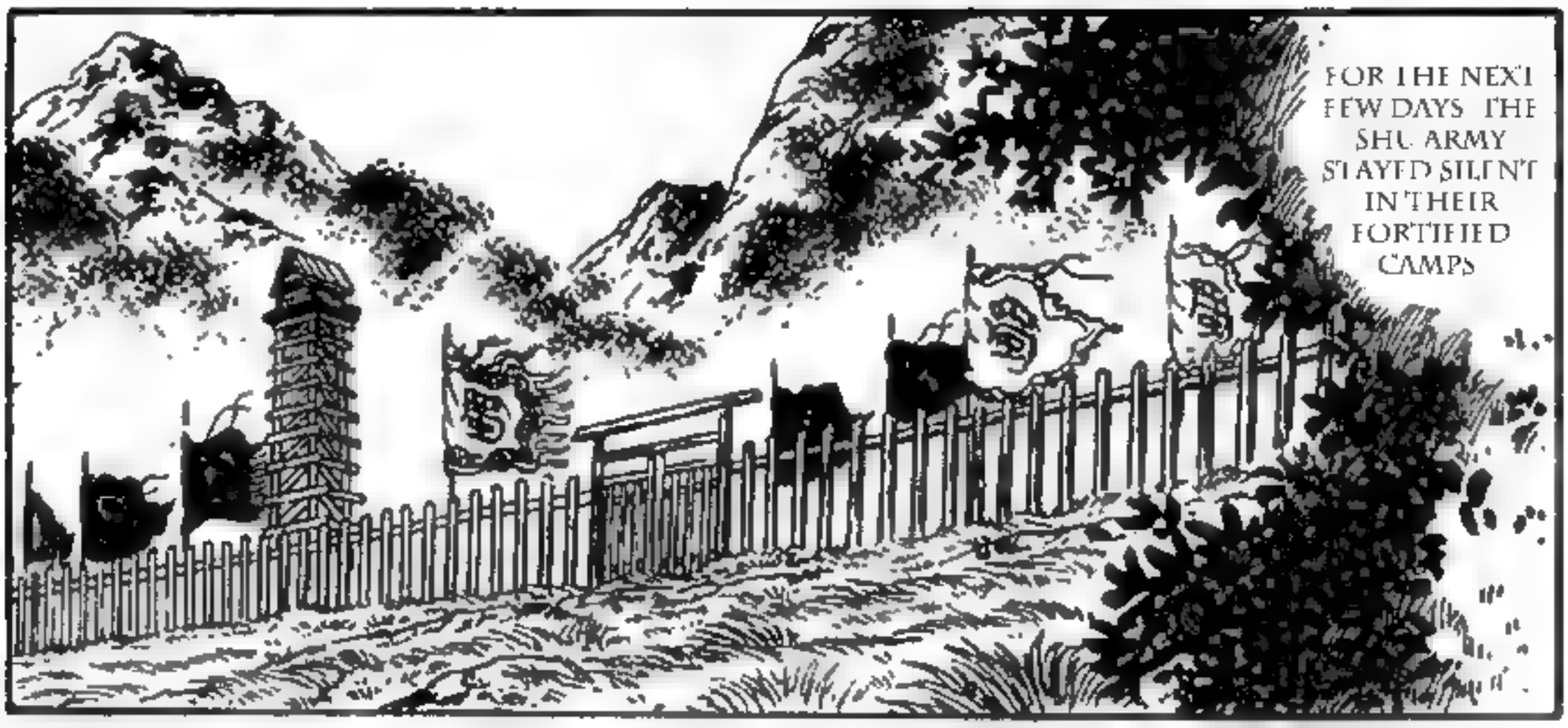
MNN...

YES, ONE OF MY BODYGUARDS COLLAPSED FROM EVEN A LIGHT GRAZE.

POISON ARROWS, YOU SAY?

YES, SIR.

THANK YOU FOR THE INFORMATION. YOU MAY STAND BY AND REST UNTIL YOUR NEXT ORDERS.


FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS THE SHU ARMY STAYED SILENT IN THEIR FORTIFIED CAMPS

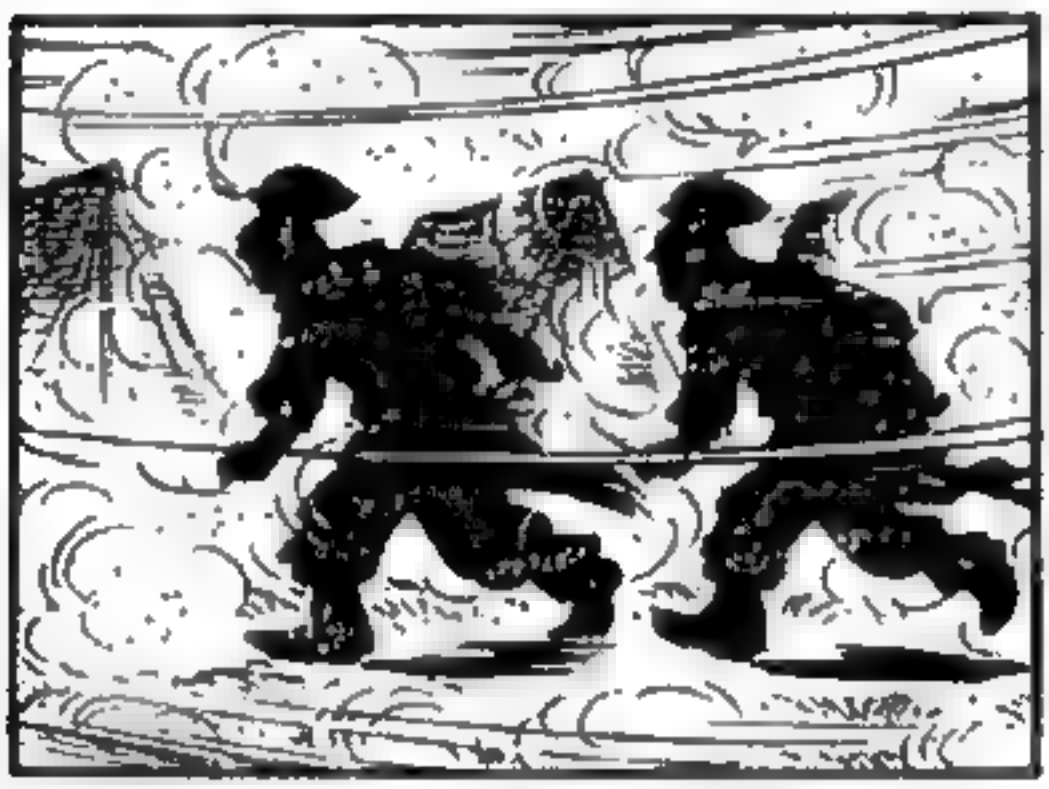
THIS INACTIVITY WAS NOT DUE TO LACK OF A PLAN, BUT KONGMING'S DESIRE TO WAIT FOR A CHANGE IN THE WEATHER. THE SKILLED STRATEGIST ALWAYS SOUGHT TO USE THE WEATHER TO HIS ADVANTAGE

10 DAYS LATER...

LOOKS LIKE A WIND STRONG ENOUGH TO CONTINUE INTO TOMORROW.

THE WINDS ARE QUITE STRONG TODAY. PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BEST TO RETIRE INSIDE SIR'S TENT.

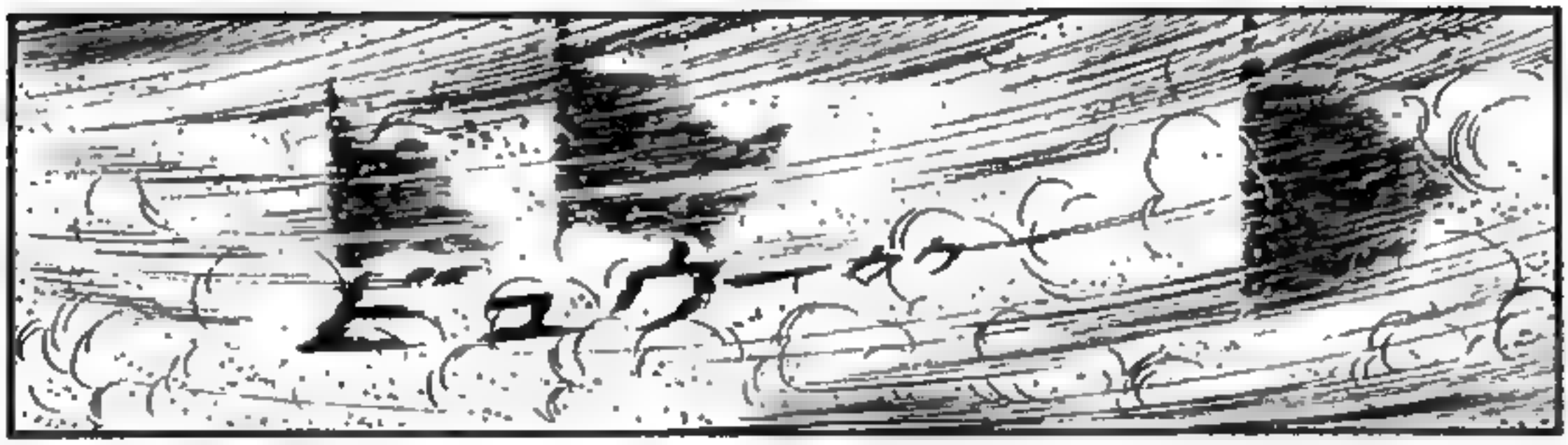
A CLOAK?
TELL ALL OFFICERS THAT WE WILL STAGE AN ALL-OUT ASSAULT ON THE CITY TOMORROW. EVERY SOLDIER IS TO BE ISSUED A CLOAK.

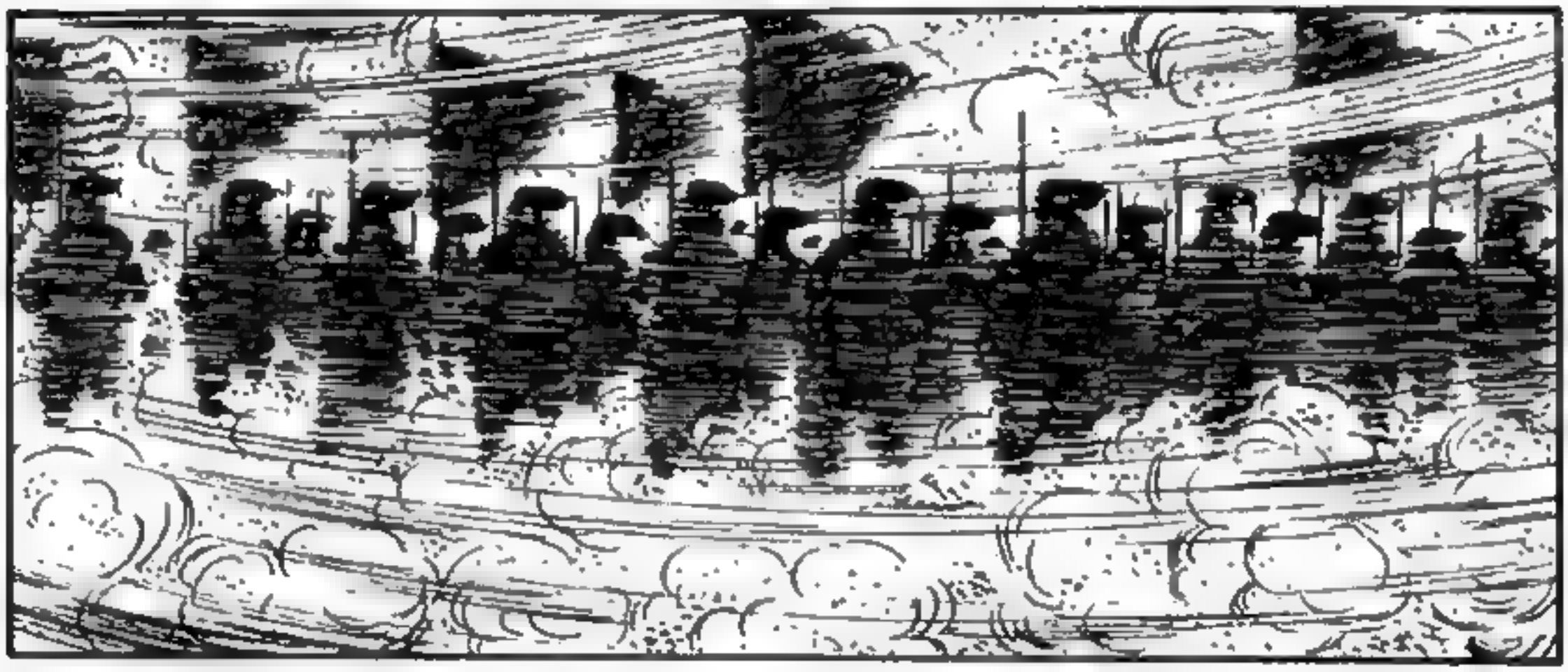


YES, SIR.
THAT'S RIGHT. ANY MAN WITHOUT A CLOAK WILL BE EXECUTED.

YES, ANY MAN WITHOUT ONE IS TO BE EXECUTED, GENERAL.
A CLOAK!?

YES, HE WAS QUITE ADAMANT ABOUT IT.
EVERY MAN MUST HAVE A CLOAK?





I WONDER WHAT THE DEAL WITH THE CLOAK IS?

WHO KNOWS...

HEAR ME WELL!

YOU ARE TO TIE YOUR CLOAK INTO A BAG AND FILL IT WITH EARTH!

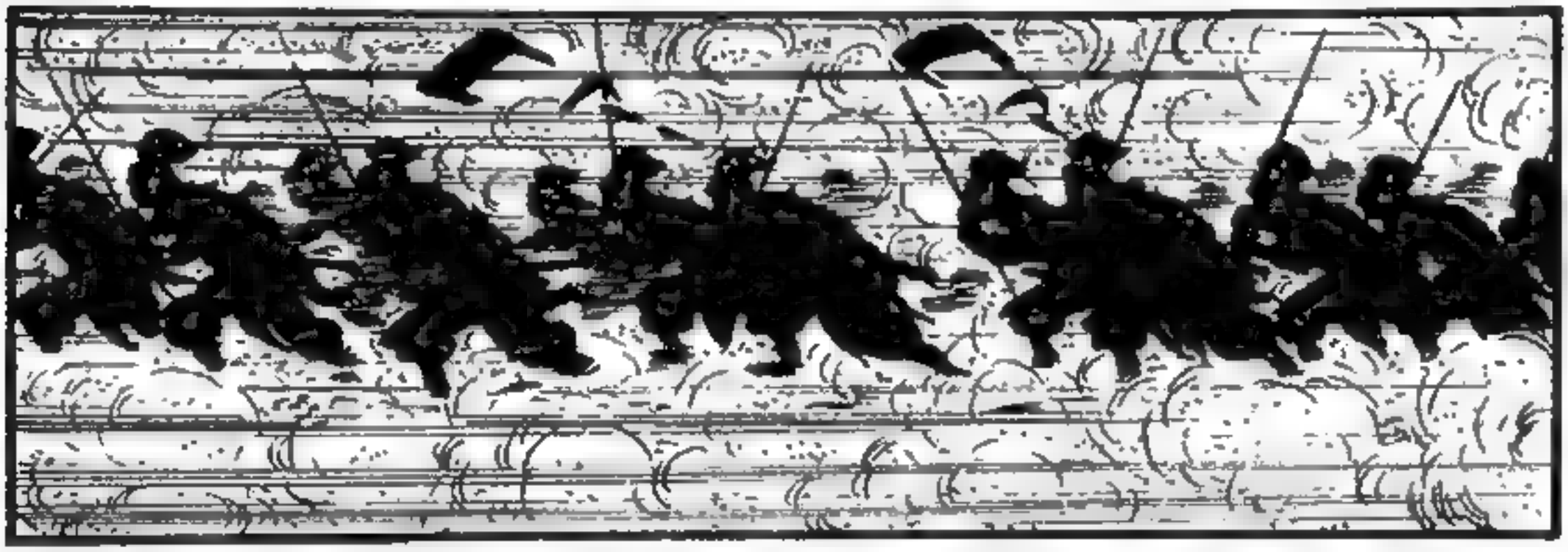
YOU WILL CARRY THIS AND DUMP IT IN THE MOAT SO AS TO CREATE A NATURAL RAMP.

SO THAT'S WHAT THE CLOAK IS FOR..

OHH!

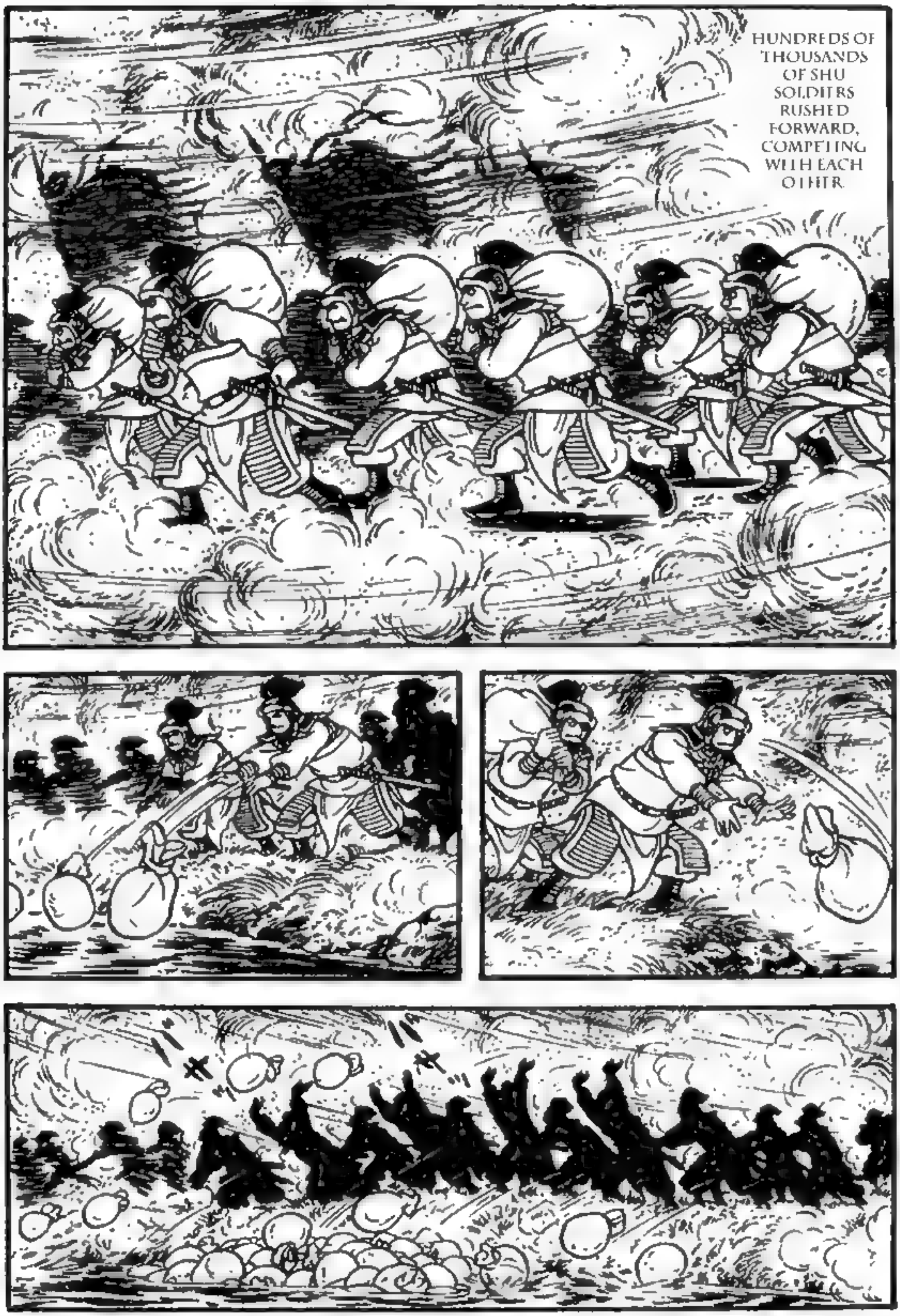
THE FIRST ONE OVER THE RIVER AND THE FIRST TO SCALE THE WALLS WILL BE GREATLY REWARDED WITH WEALTH AND RANK.

NOW GET GOING!

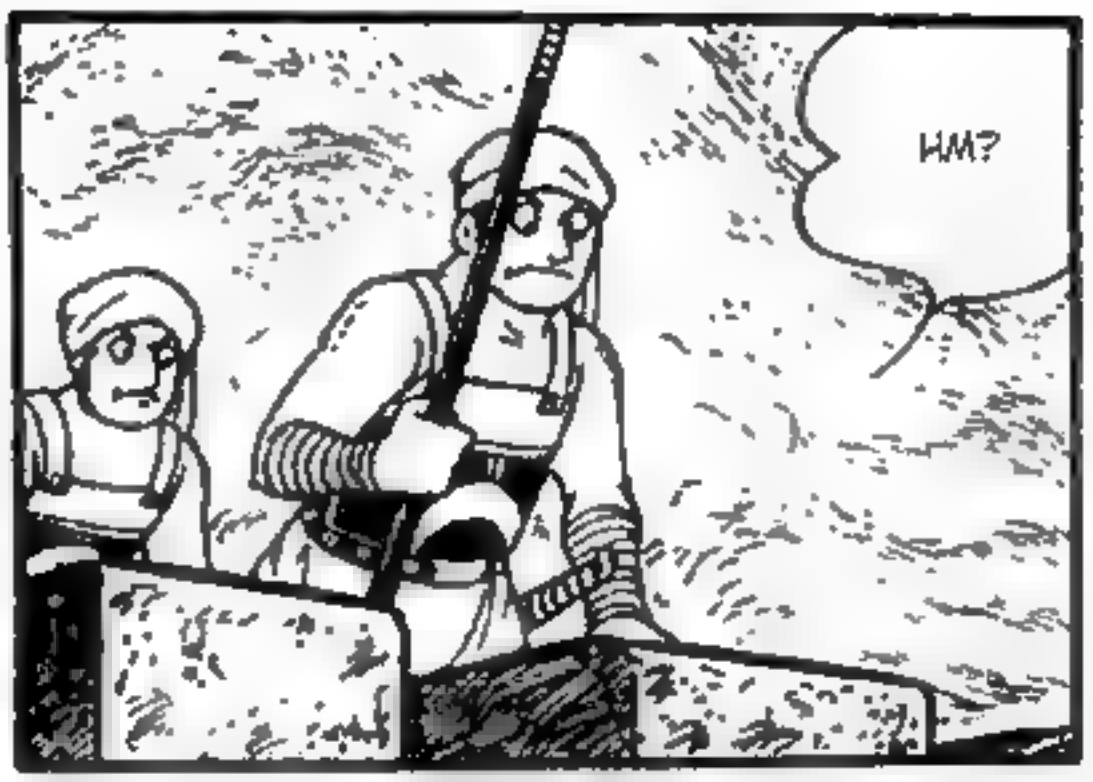


I'M GONNA BE THE FIRST OVER THE WALLS!

THAT REWARD IS MINE!

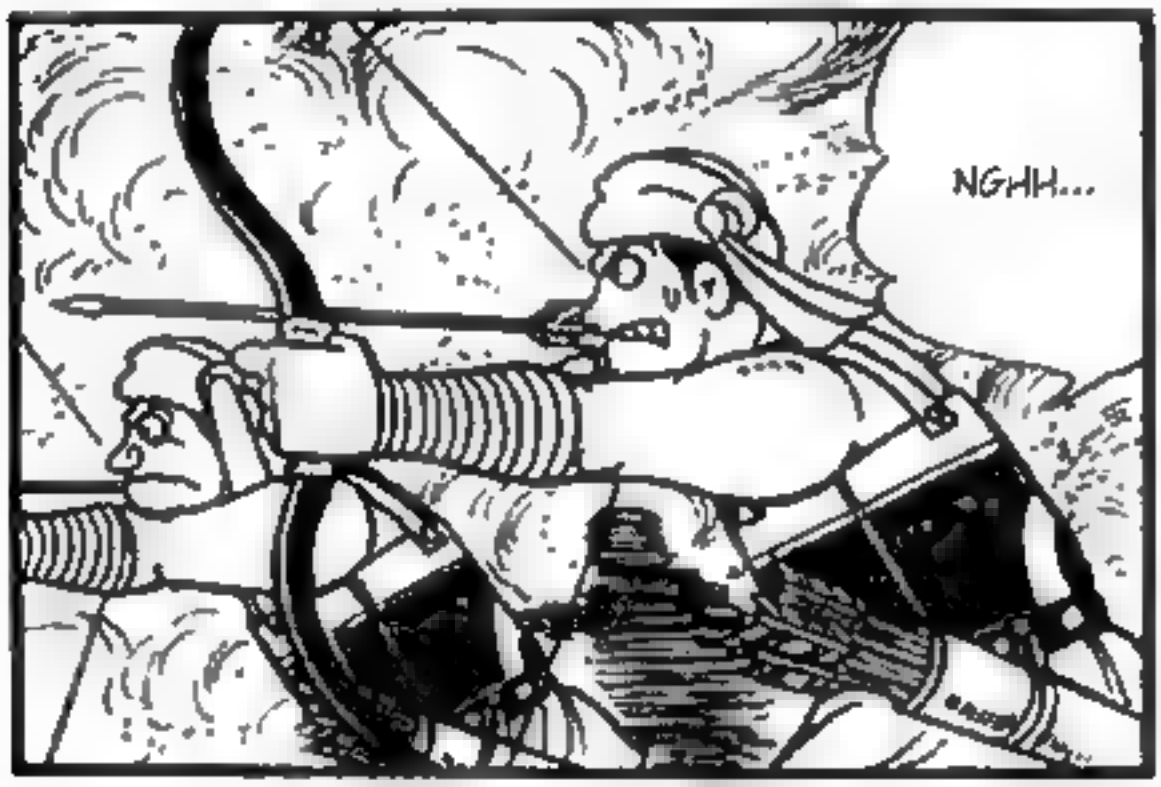

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF SHU SOLDIERS RUSHED FORWARD, COMPETING WITH EACH OTHER.

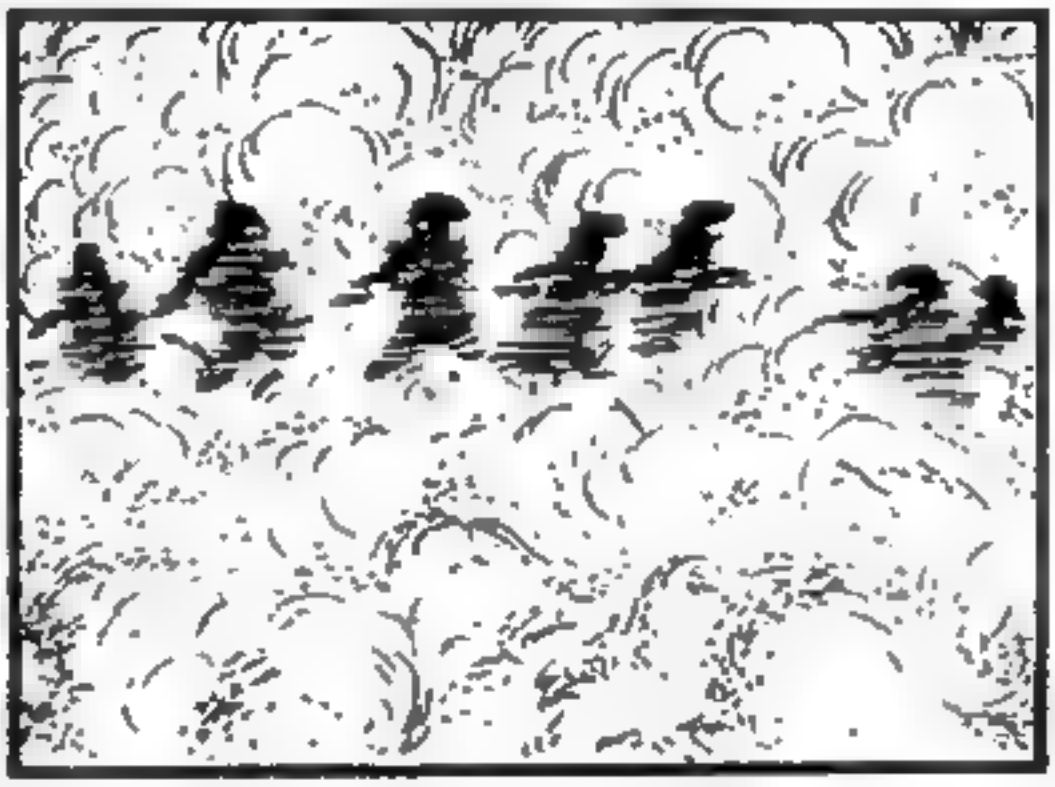
WHAT'S GOING ON?


HM?

IT MATTERS NOT WHAT THE ENEMY IS UP TO! SHOOT THEM ONCE THEY'RE WITHIN RANGE!

HM...
I CAN'T MAKE OUT THE ENEMIES WITH ALL THIS DIRT FLYING AROUND IN THE AIR, SIR.

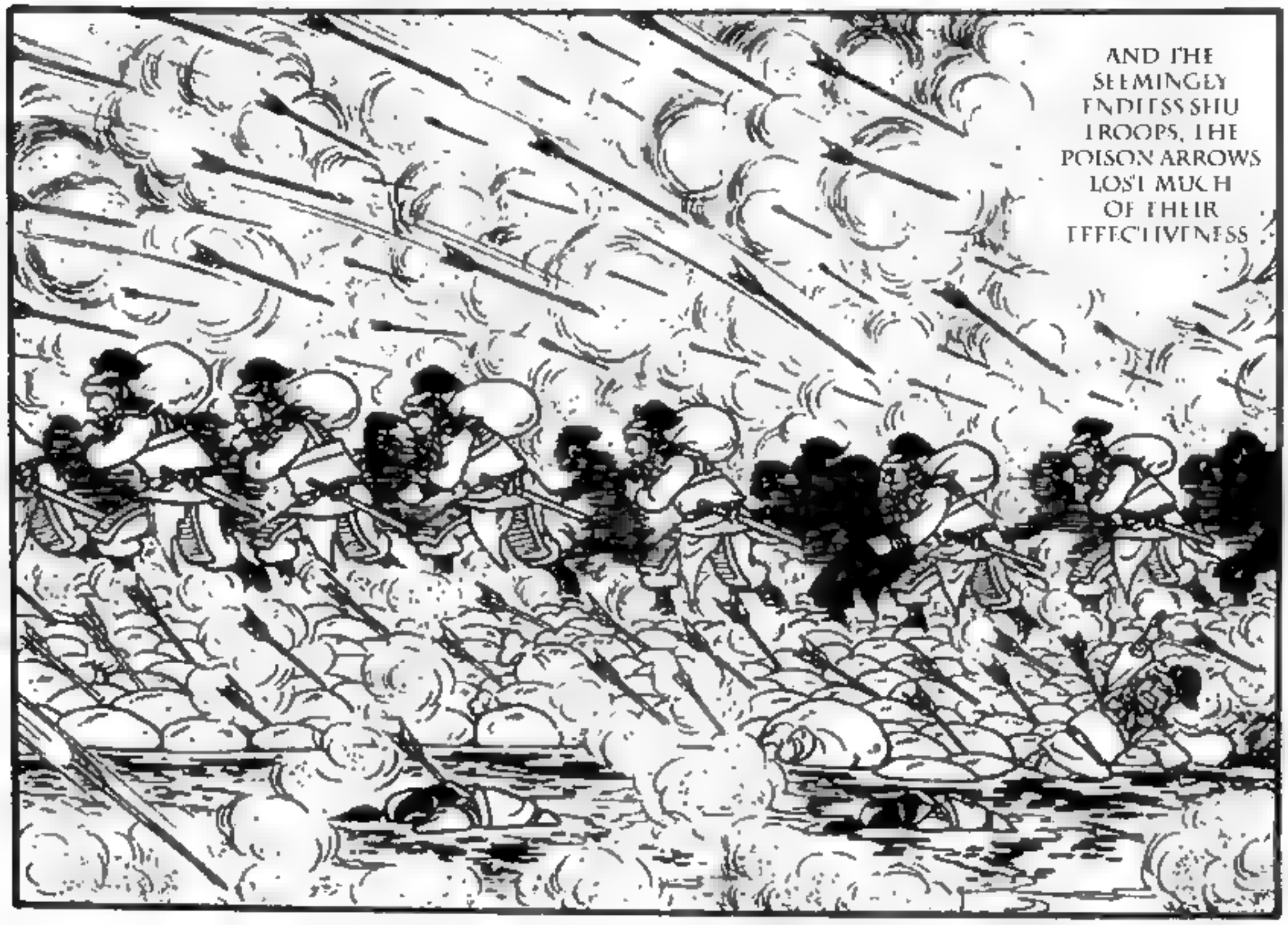

NGHH...



HOWEVER AGAINST THE STRONG WIND,

AGHH!

GAHHH!


AND THE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS SHU TROOPS, THE POISON ARROWS LOST MUCH OF THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

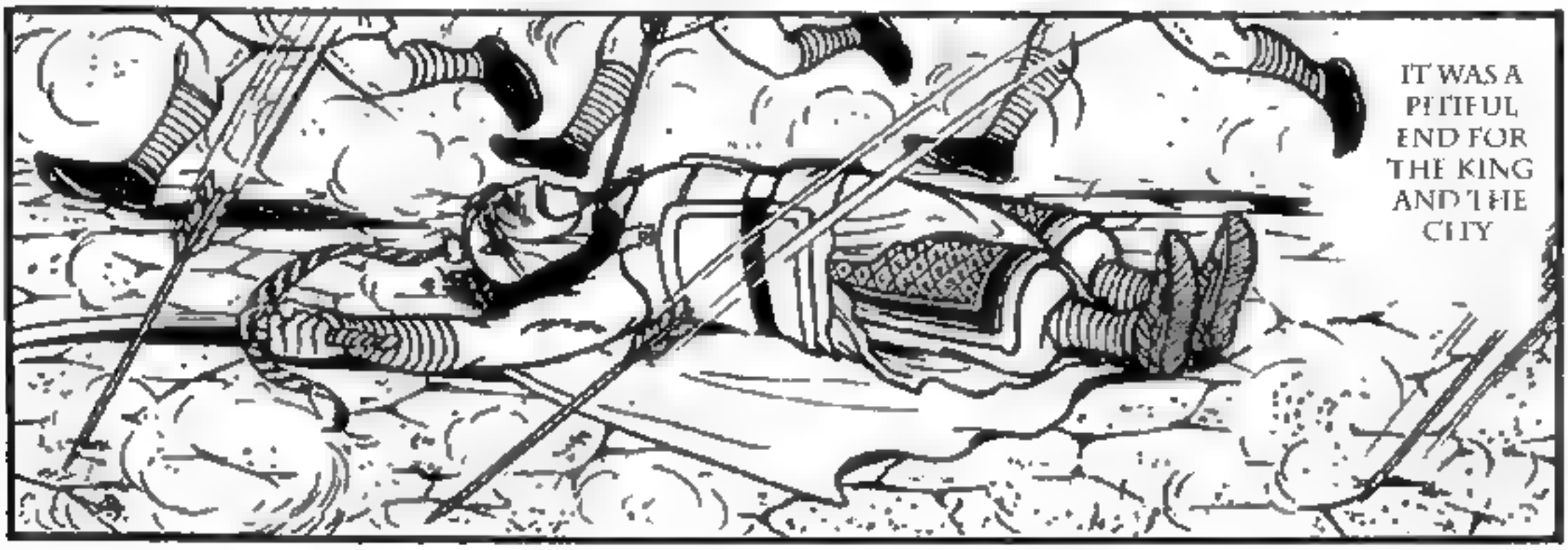
AT LAST, THE RAMP WAS MADE AND THE SOLDIERS BEGAN TO SCALE THE WALLS.

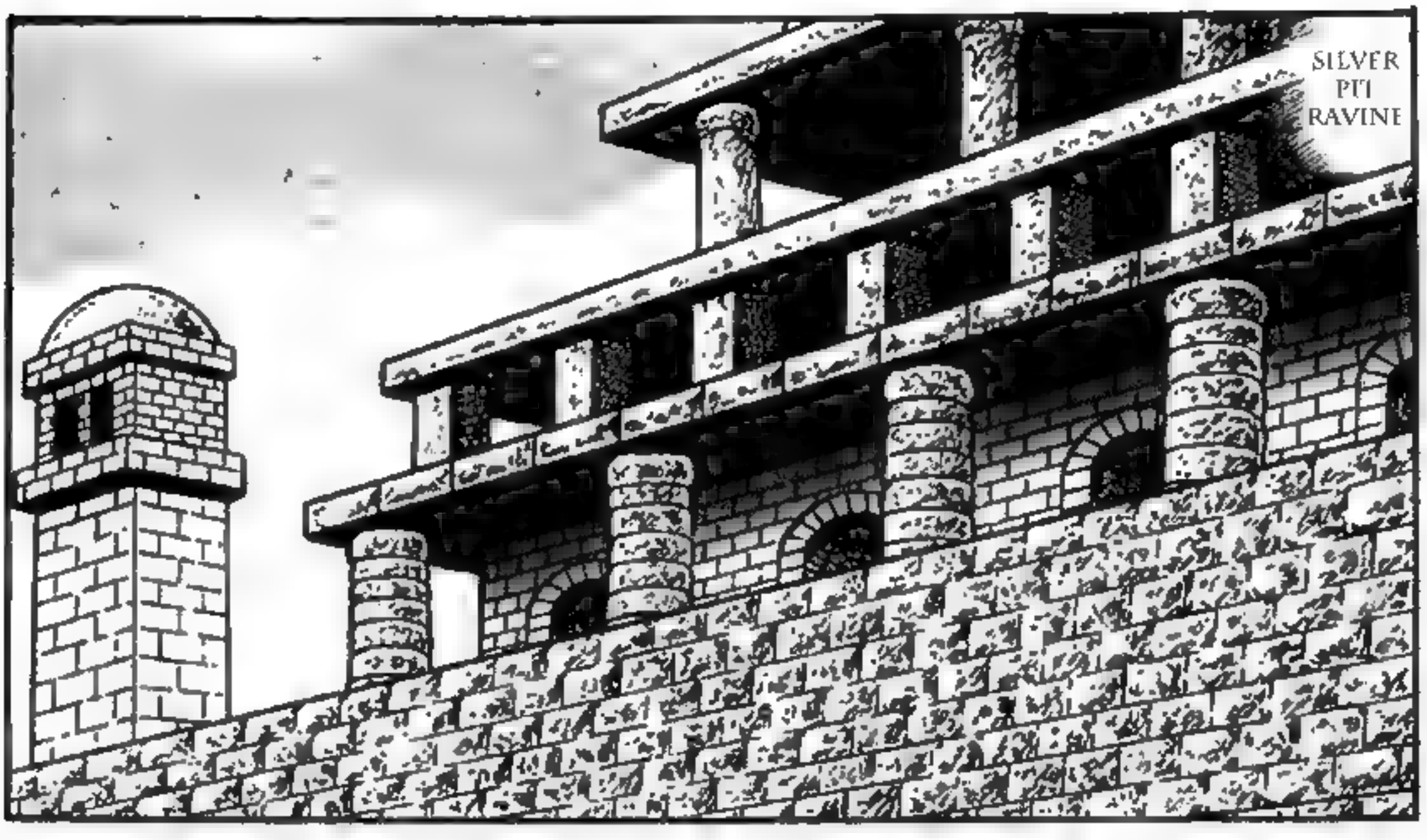
CHARGE! THE FIRST ONE OVER WILL BE GREATLY REWARDED!

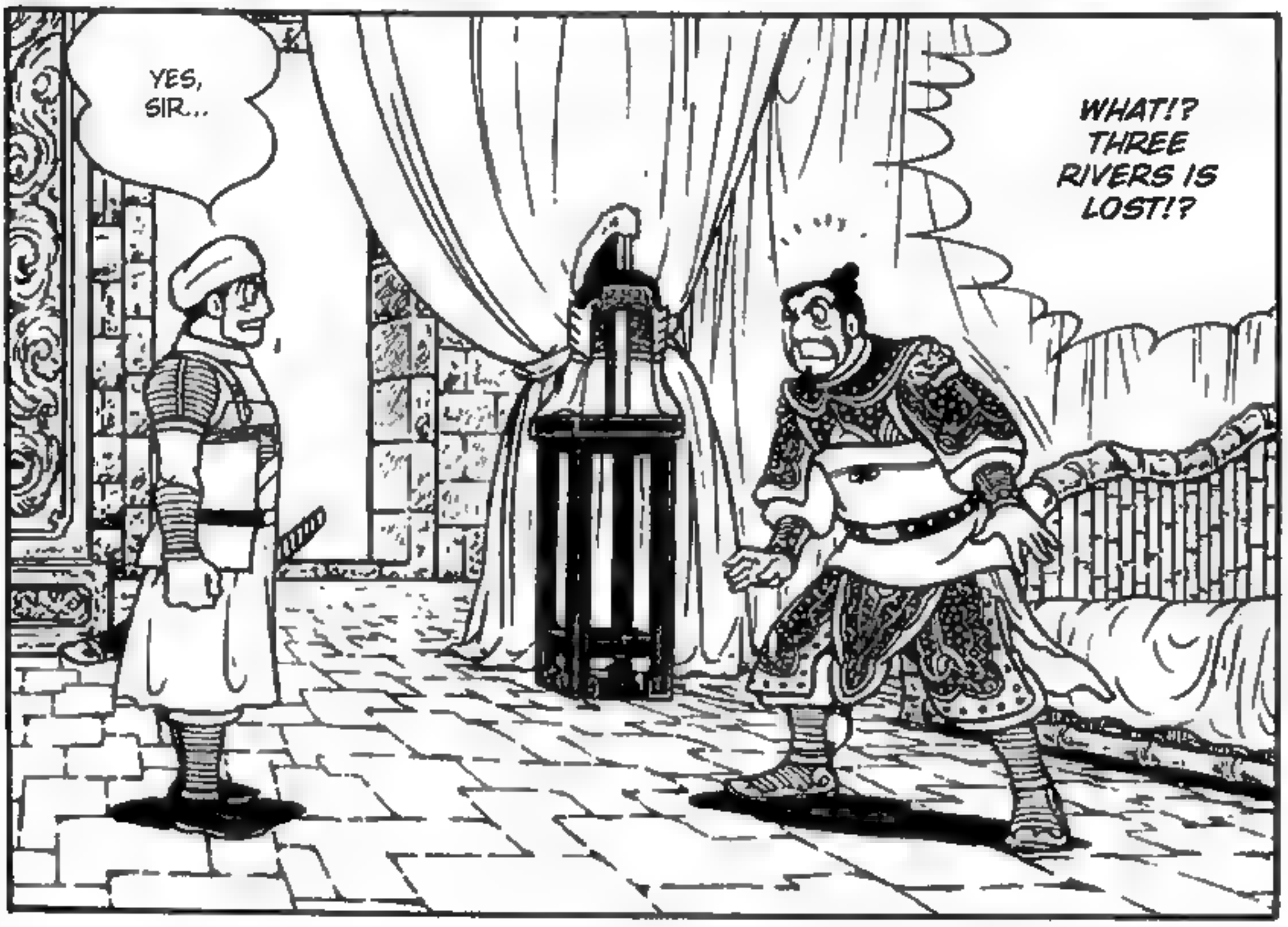
THE GARRISON COULD NOT HOPE TO WARD OFF SUCH OVER WHELMING NUMBERS

AND KING DUO SI WAS SLAIN AMIDST THIS CON-FUSION

IN PANIC, THEY RAN INTO THE CITY.


IT WAS A PITIFUL END FOR THE KING AND THE CITY


SILVER
PIT
RAVINE


YES,
SIR...
WHAT!?
THREE
RIVERS IS
LOST!?

HE PERISHED IN BATTLE, ALONG WITH THE GARRISON...

AND WHAT OF DUO SI?

ASSEMBLE ALL THE CHIEFS.

MNN... I NEVER IMAGINED THE CITY WOULD FALL SO EASILY...

YES, SIR.

THE URGENT MESSAGE WAS SENT TO ALL THE CHIEFS

THEN ARE YOU SAYING WE SHOULD JUST SURRENDER!?

IF EVEN DUO SI LOST DEFENDING THE HIGHLY DEFENSIBLE THREE RIVERS, WHAT CHANCE DO WE HAVE!?

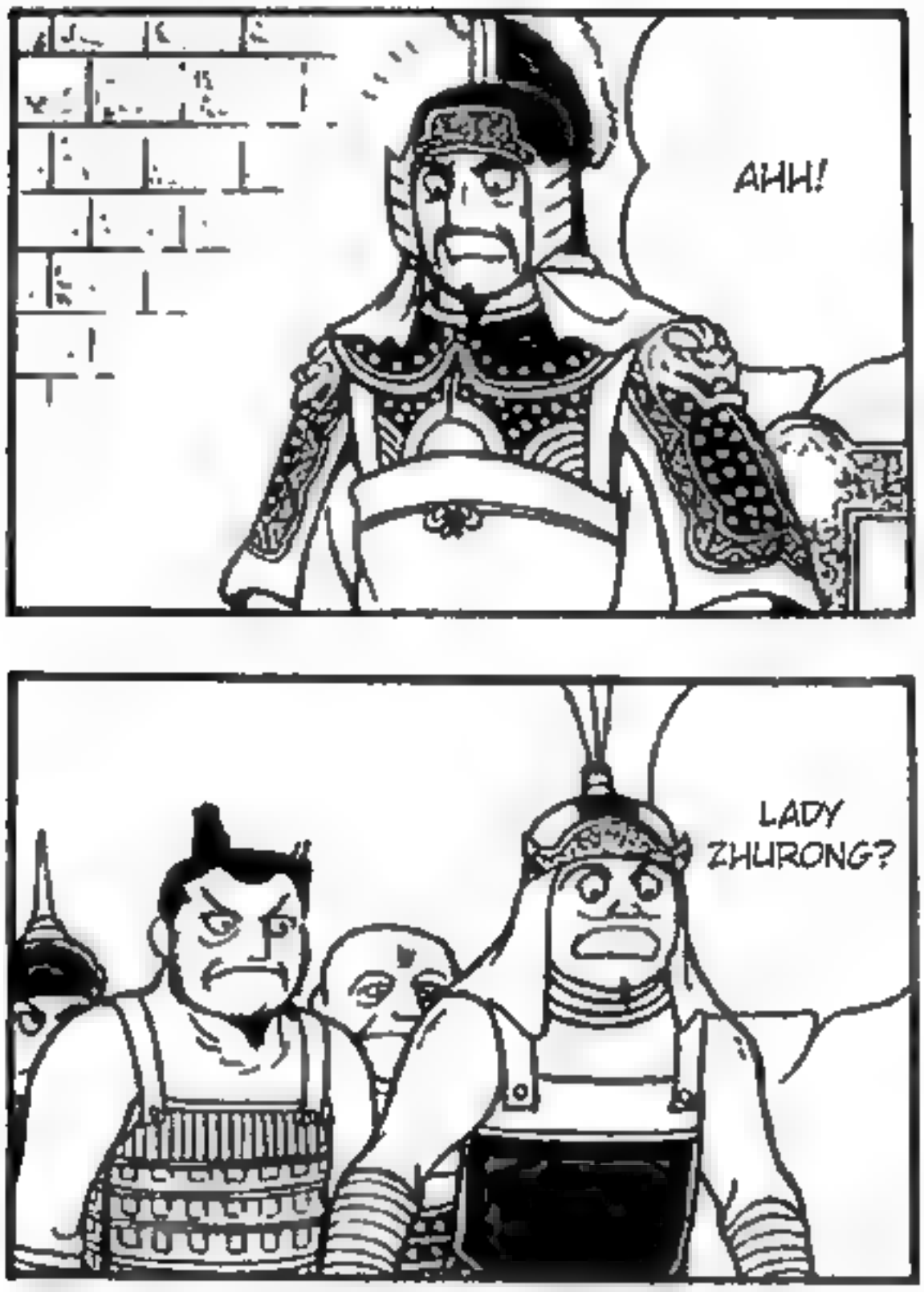
WE CANNOT BEAT THEM IN A CONVEN-TIONAL BATTLE!

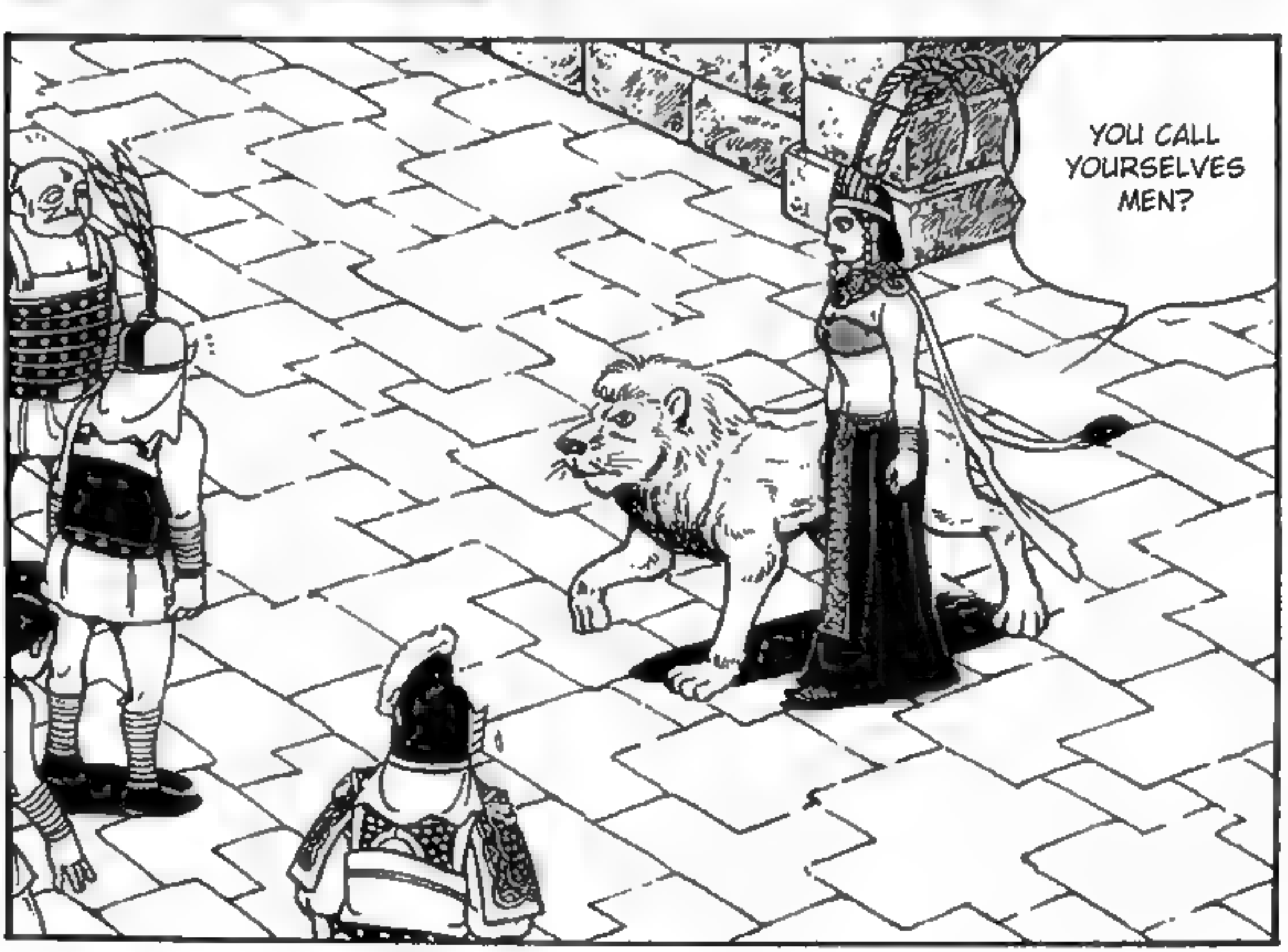
SURRENDER IS NOT AN OPTION!

YES, WHAT TO DO... THAT IS THE QUESTION.
THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? THAT'S NOT EVEN A PLAN!
LOOK, WHY DON'T WE JUST... DO LIKE WE ALWAYS DO?

THIS IS NO TIME FOR LAUGHING!
WHO'S THE ONE LAUGHING!?

?


AHH!
HAHAHAHA
LADY ZHURONG?


YOU CALL YOURSELVES MEN?

OH YES, YOU WILL!

I WILL NOT BE LECTURED BY MY OWN WIFE!

T-THE ENEMIES THIS TIME ARE LIKE NO OTHER WE'VE FACED BEFORE! THEY ARE LED BY THE MOST CUNNING AND MANIPULATIVE KONGMING!

NOT ONLY HAVE YOU LET THE ENEMY MARCH ALL THE WAY TO OUR CAPITAL, YOU STILL CAN'T EVEN HOLD A PROPER WAR COUNCIL! YET YOU CALL YOURSELF KING!?

WELL, IF YOU FEEL SO CONFIDENT, I SUPPOSE I CAN GIVE YOU A CHANCE...

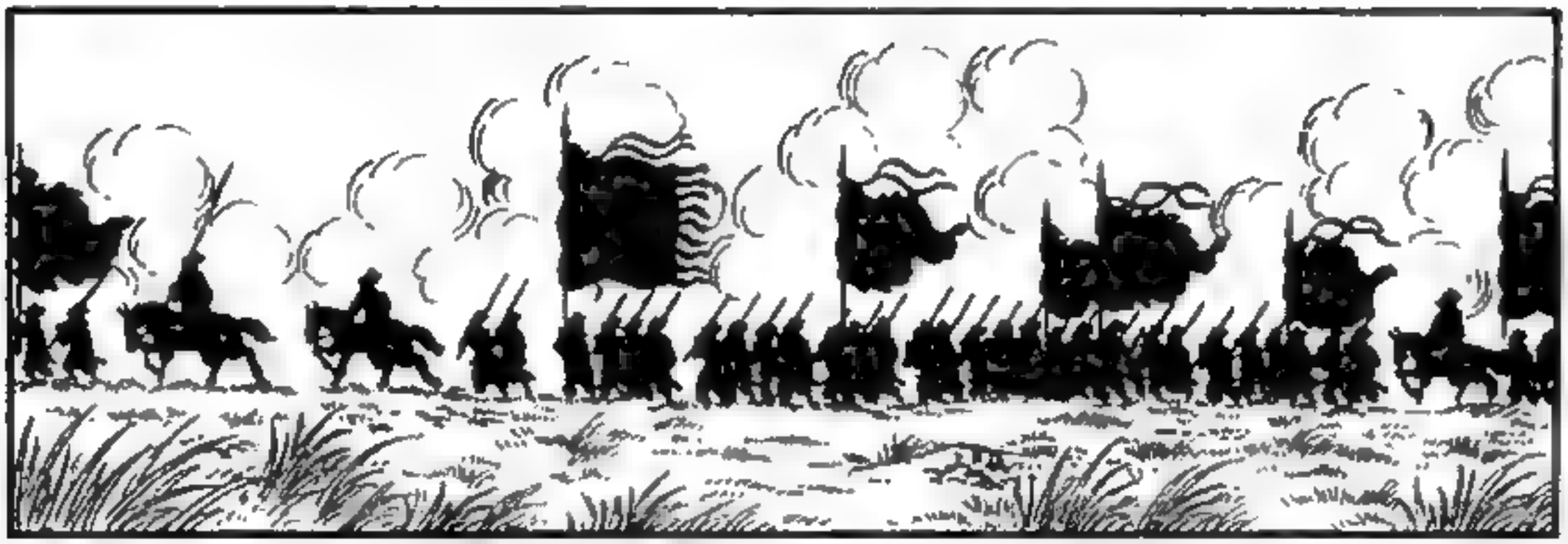
GIVE ME AN ARMY AND I'LL PROVE IT TO YOU!

ENOUGH EXCUSES! IF I HAD COMMAND, I COULD TRAMPLE ALL OVER THIS KONGMING!

YES, MA'AM...

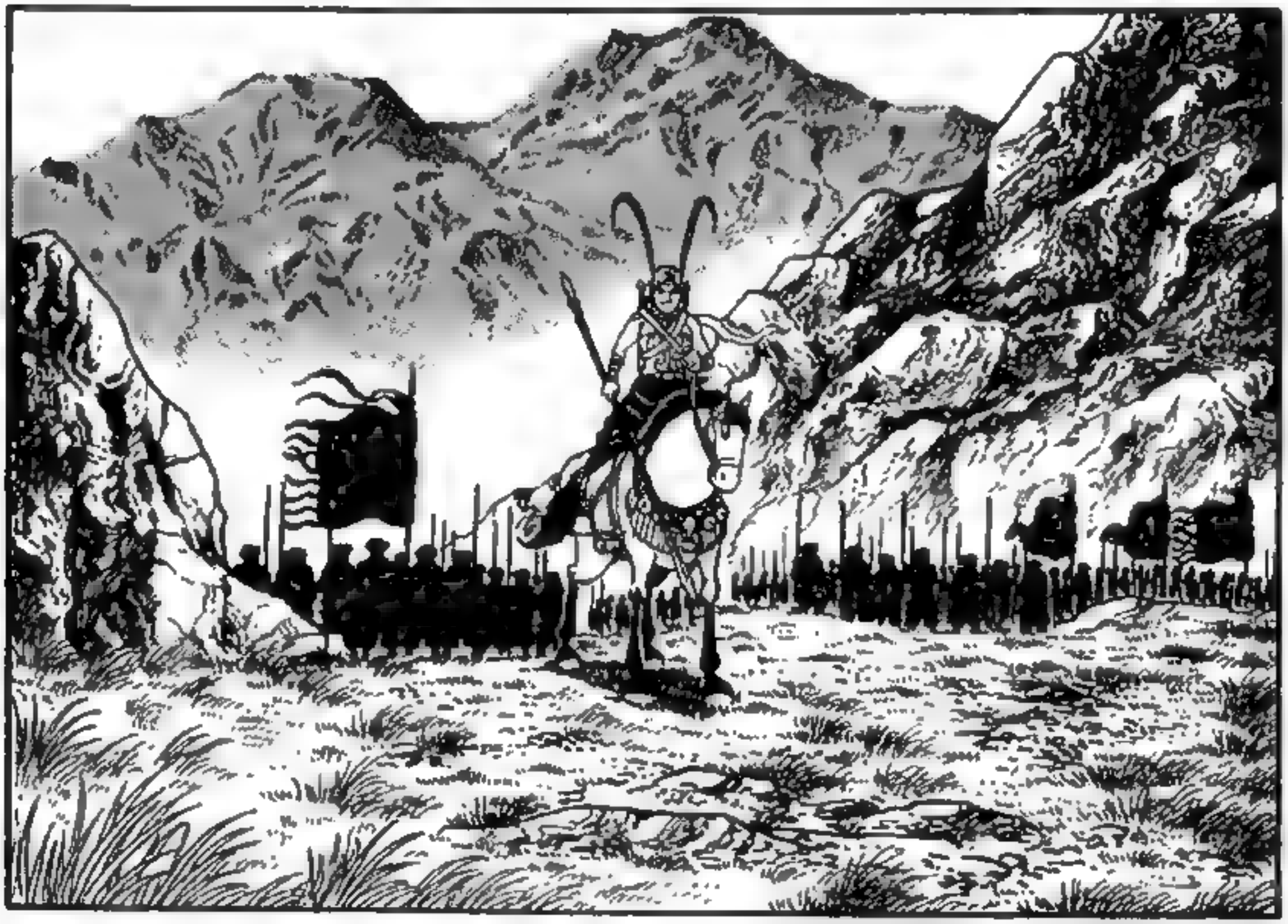
ALL OF YOU ARE NOW TO LISTEN TO MY ORDERS NOW.

MENG HUO'S WIFE CLAIMED DESCENT FROM ZHURONG, THE GOD OF FIRE AND THE SOUTH. THUS, THE PEOPLE CALLED HER LADY ZHURONG. AND SHE WAS A MASTER OF THE FLYING SWORD WHO NEVER MISSED HER AIM.



張
IT'S THE NANMAN ARMY.

張遠
HM?



IS THAT A... WOMAN LEADING THE ARMY?

LOOK, IT'S A WOMAN ON THE BATTLE-FIELD!

MENG HUO'S WIFE!?

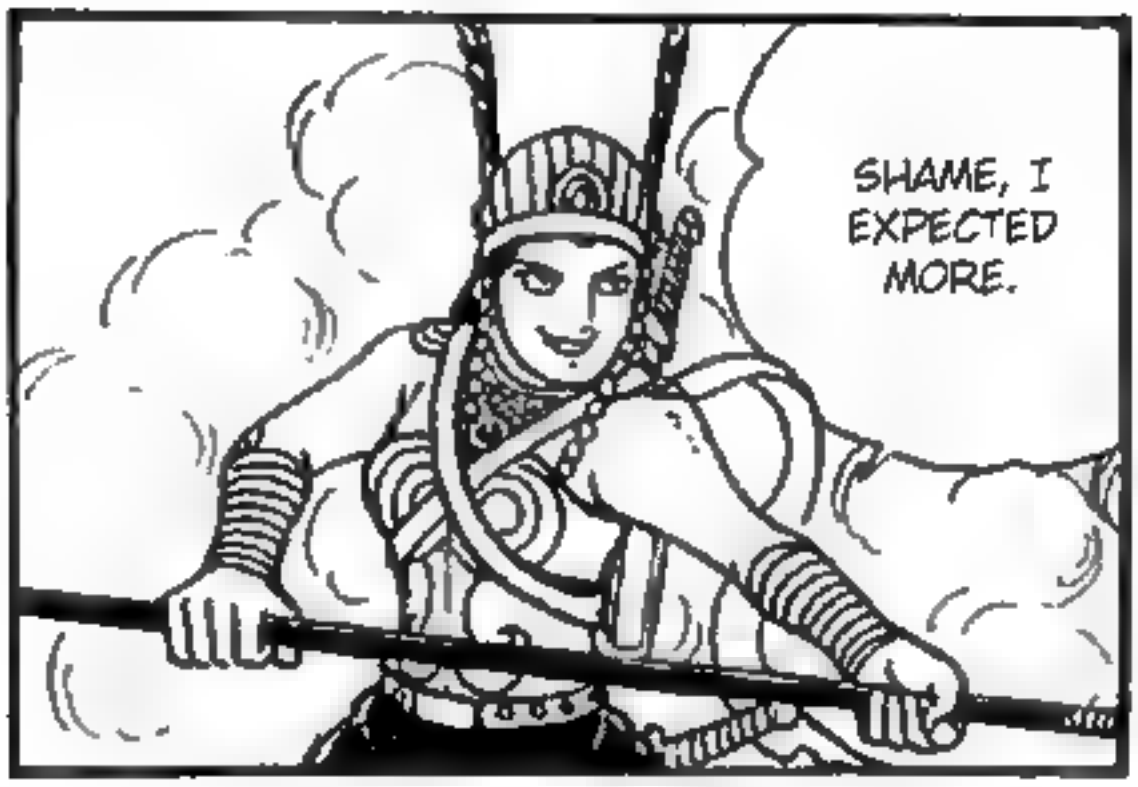
WHO'S THE GENERAL HERE!? I, LADY ZHURONG, WIFE TO MENG HUO, CHALLENGE YOU TO SINGLE COMBAT!

I'LL TAKE HER ALIVE!

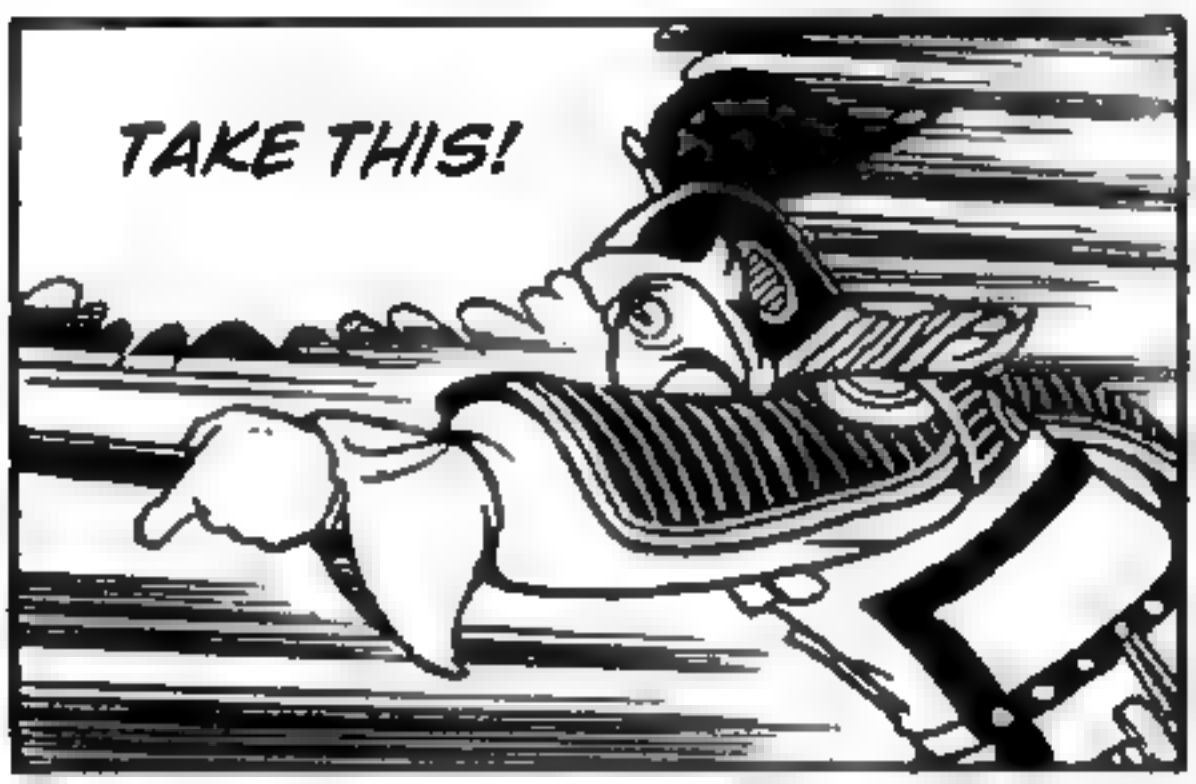
NAME YOURSELF!
I ACCEPT YOUR CHALLENGE!

LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT!

ZHANG NI!


SHAME, I EXPECTED MORE.

HMM, NOT BAD...

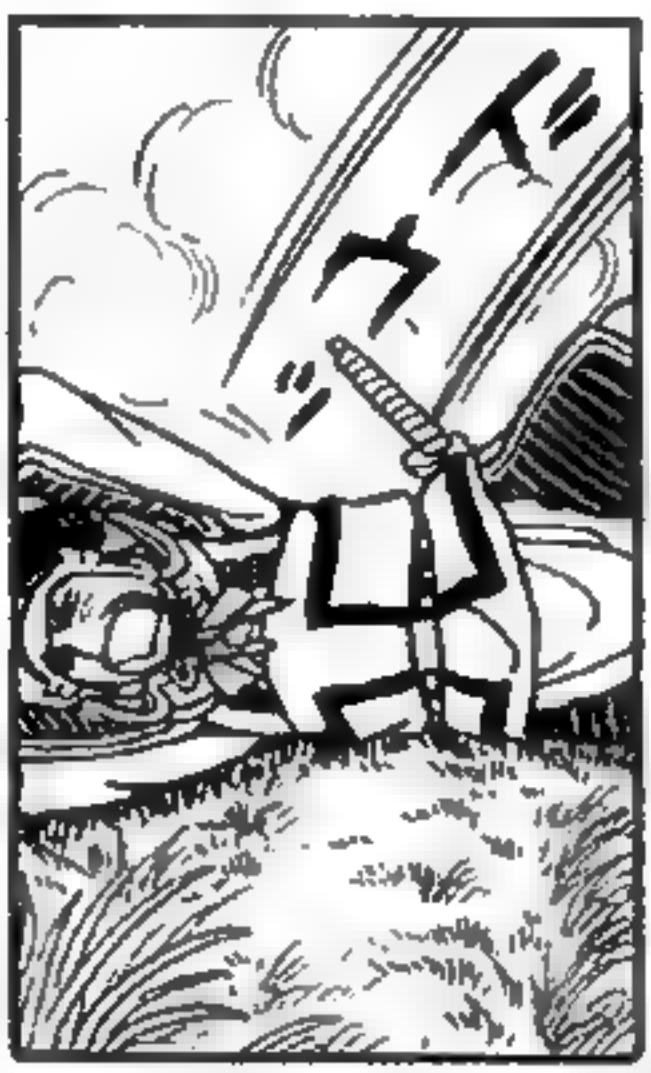

TAKE THIS!

WHAT WAS THAT!?

THE CHANCE..
..OR WILL REWARD ME GREATLY IF I CAPTURE YOU!

RUNNING AWAY AS FAST AS YOU RUN YOUR MOUTH!?

TIE HIM DOWN!

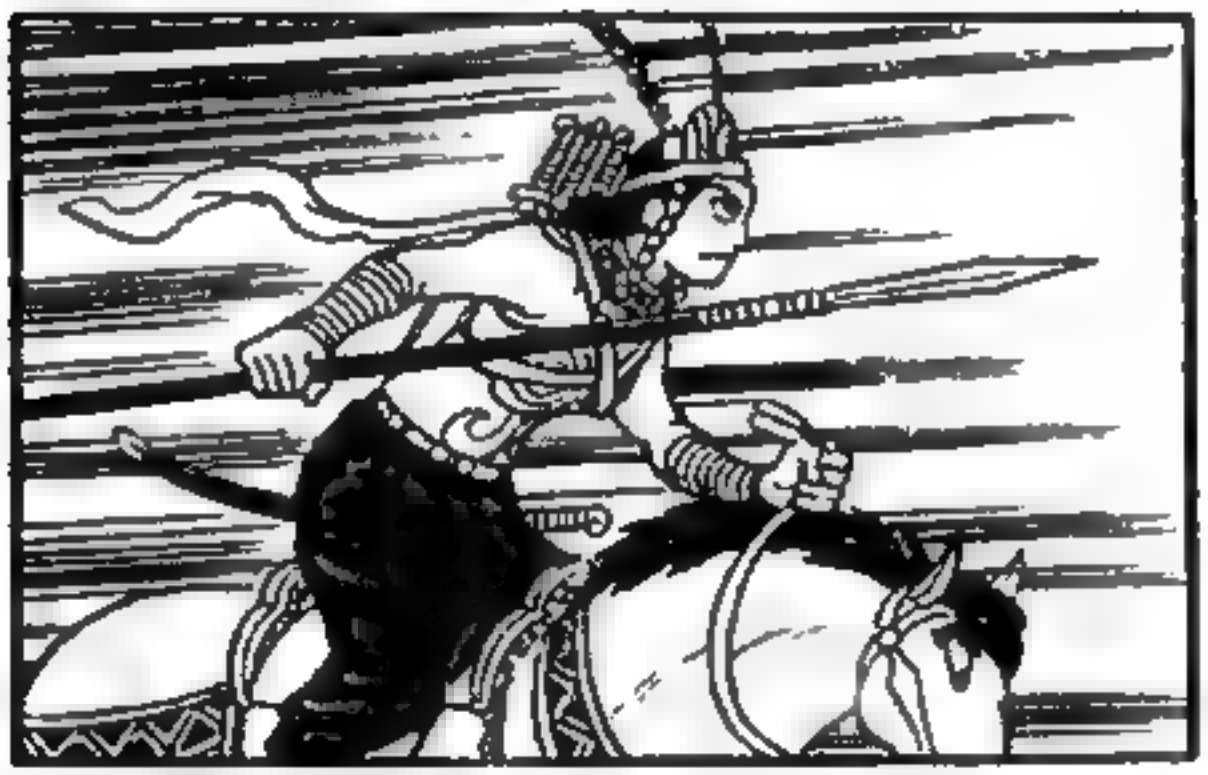


AGHH!

GENERAL MA ZHONG!
I'LL SAVE YOU, ZHANG NI!

GENERAL ZHANG NI'S BEEN CAUGHT!

HOLD IT! I'LL BE FIGHTING YOU!



HA...

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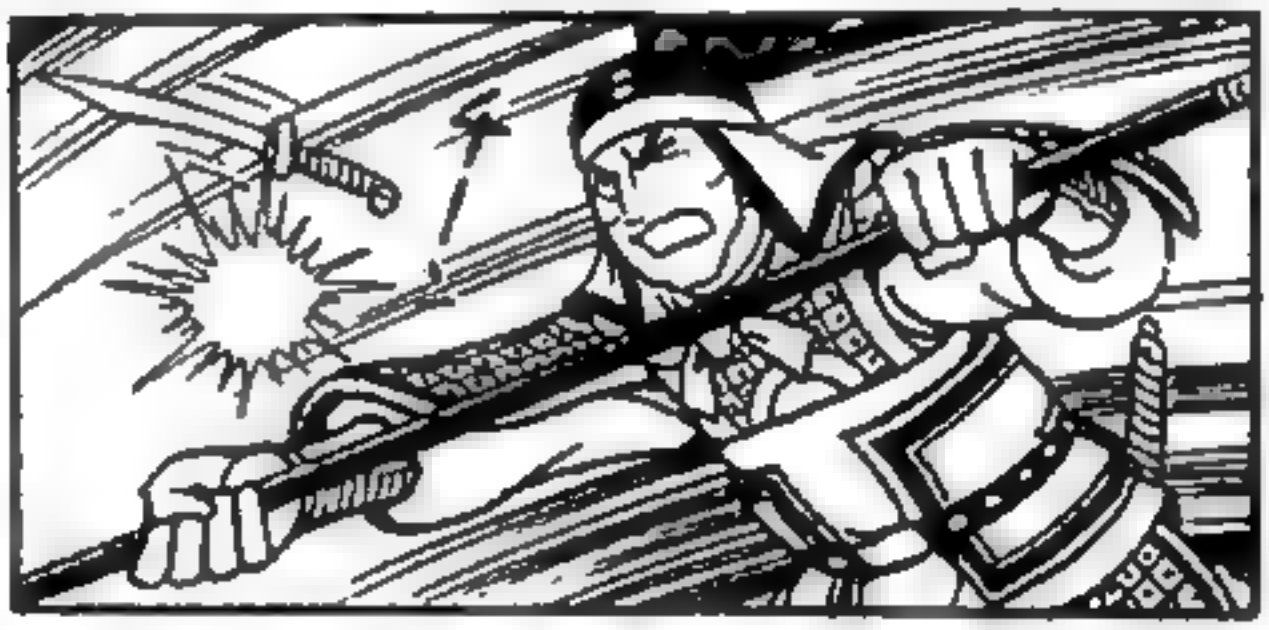
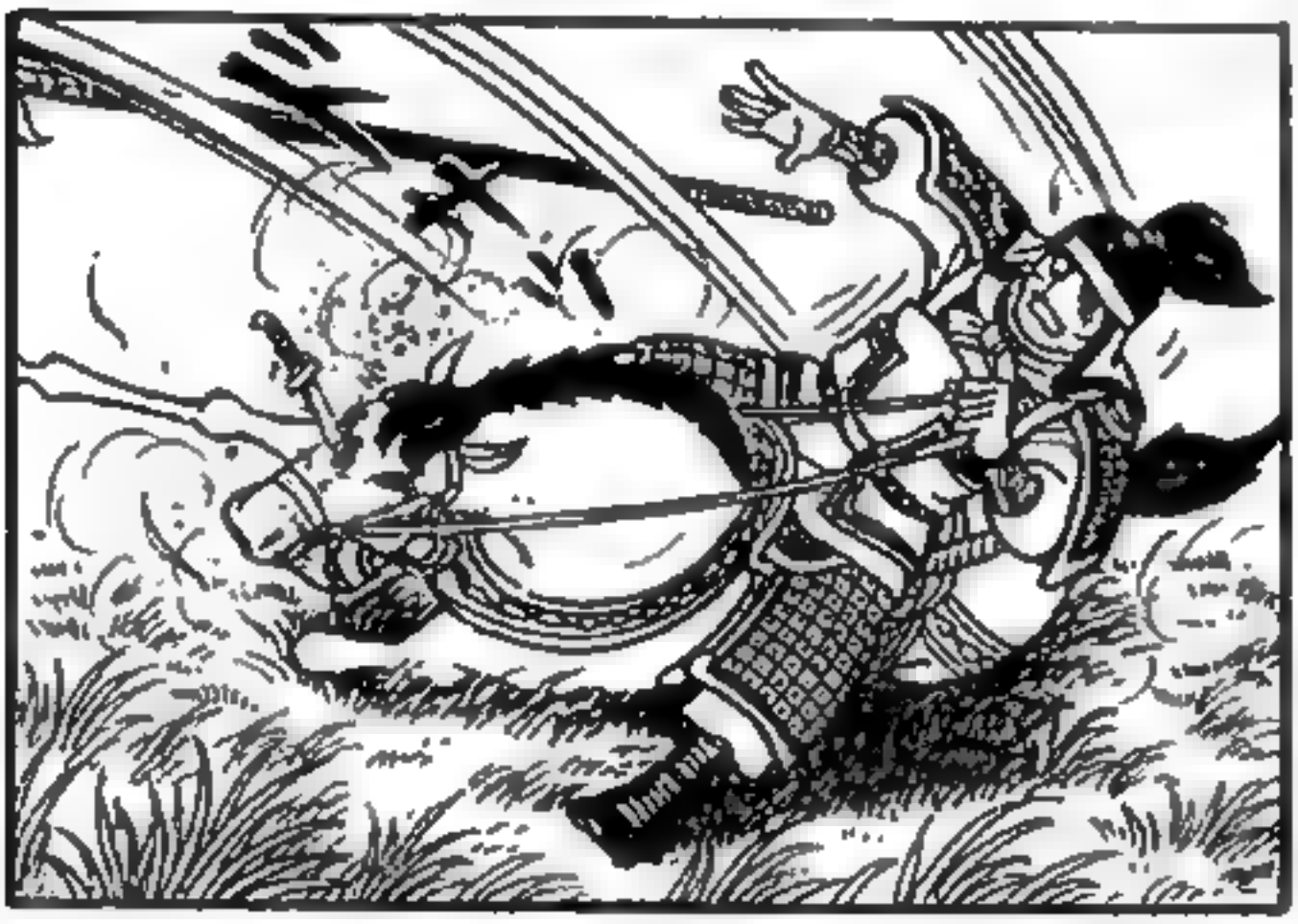
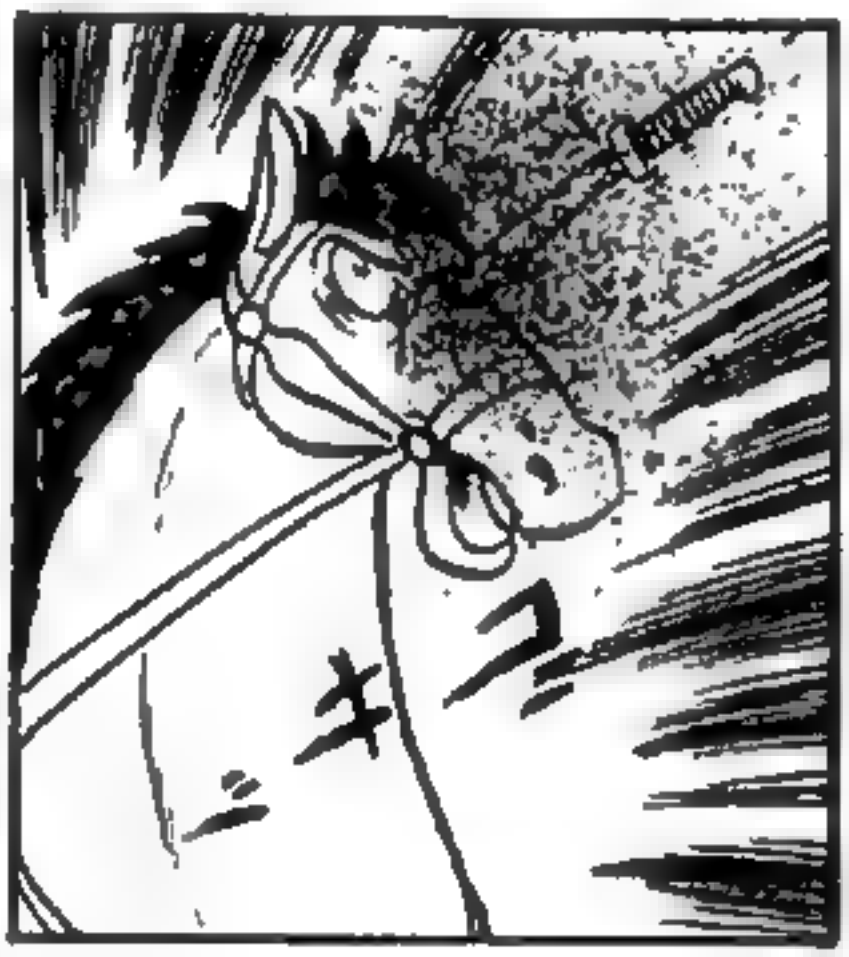
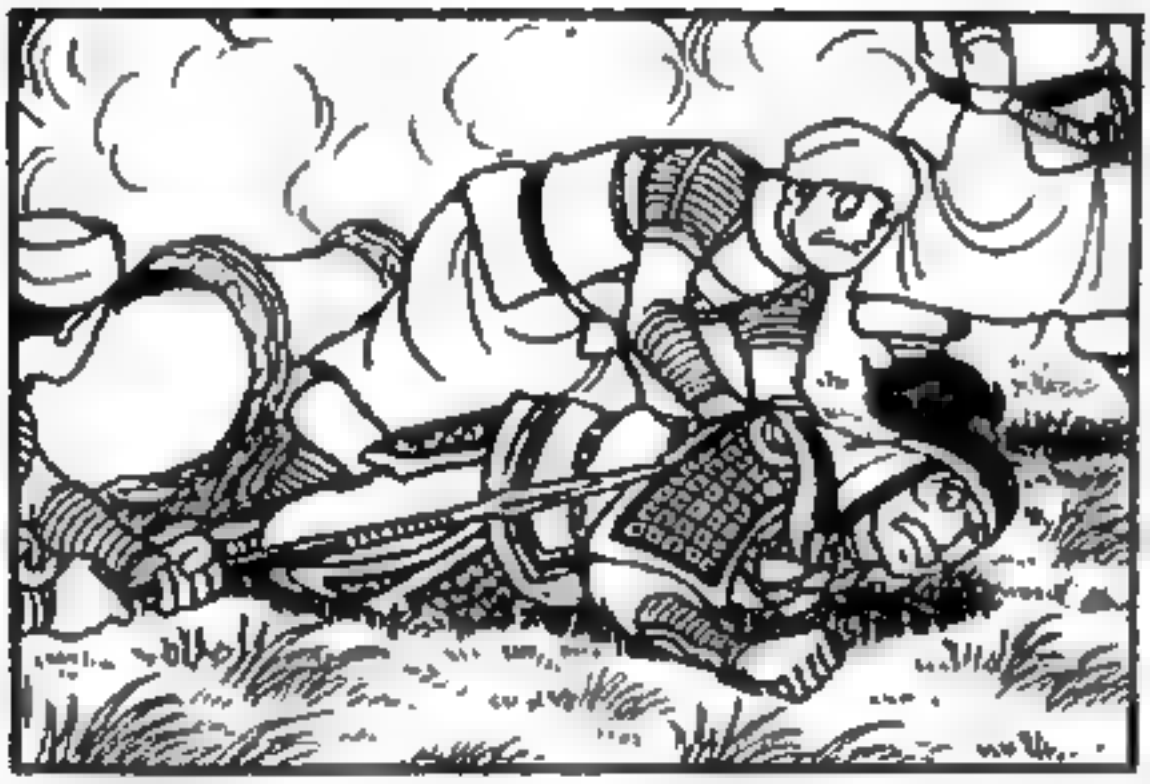
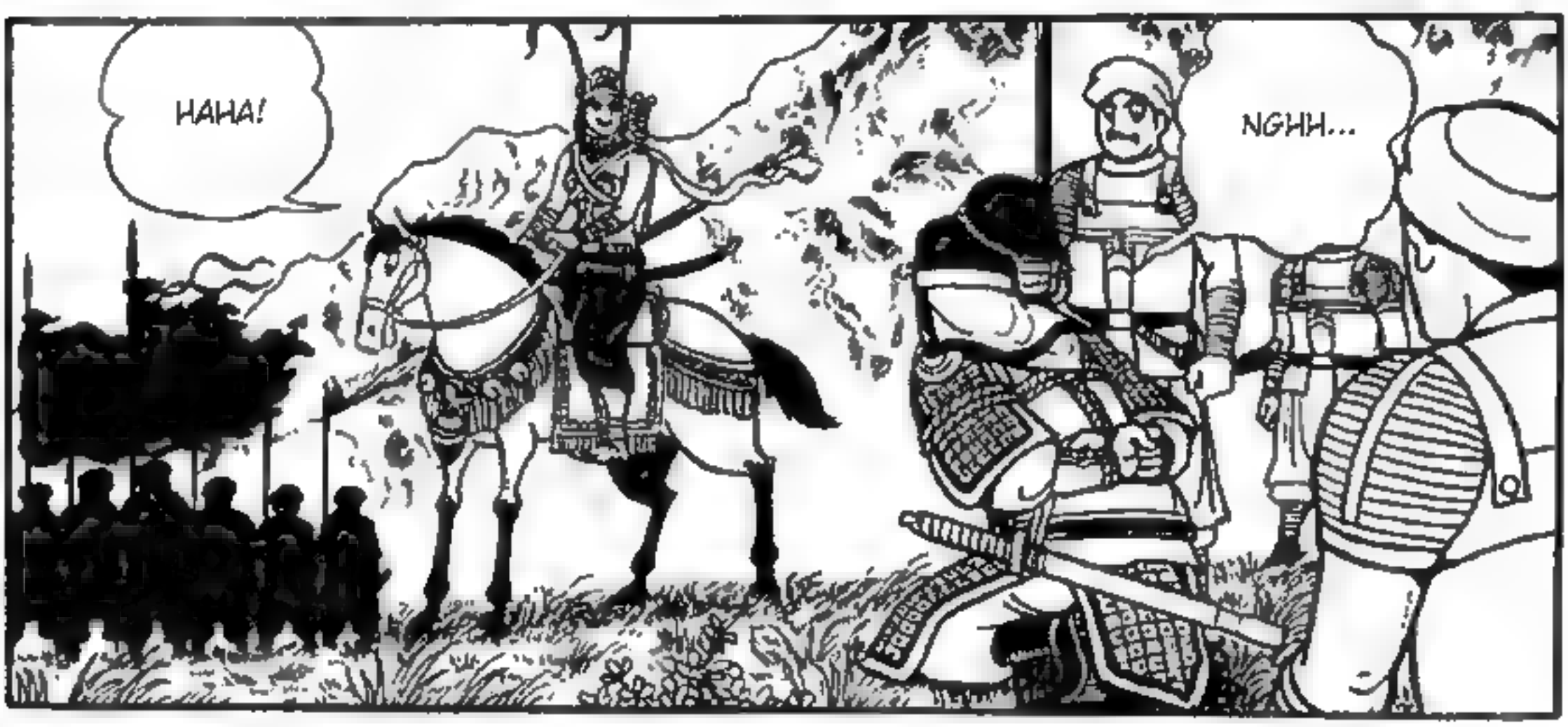
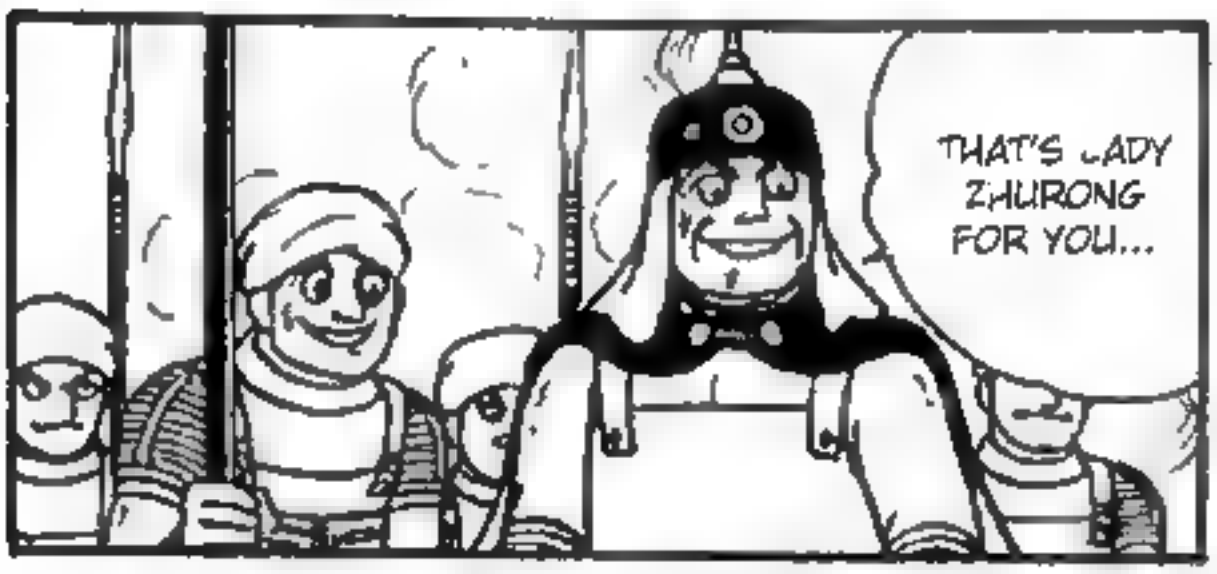




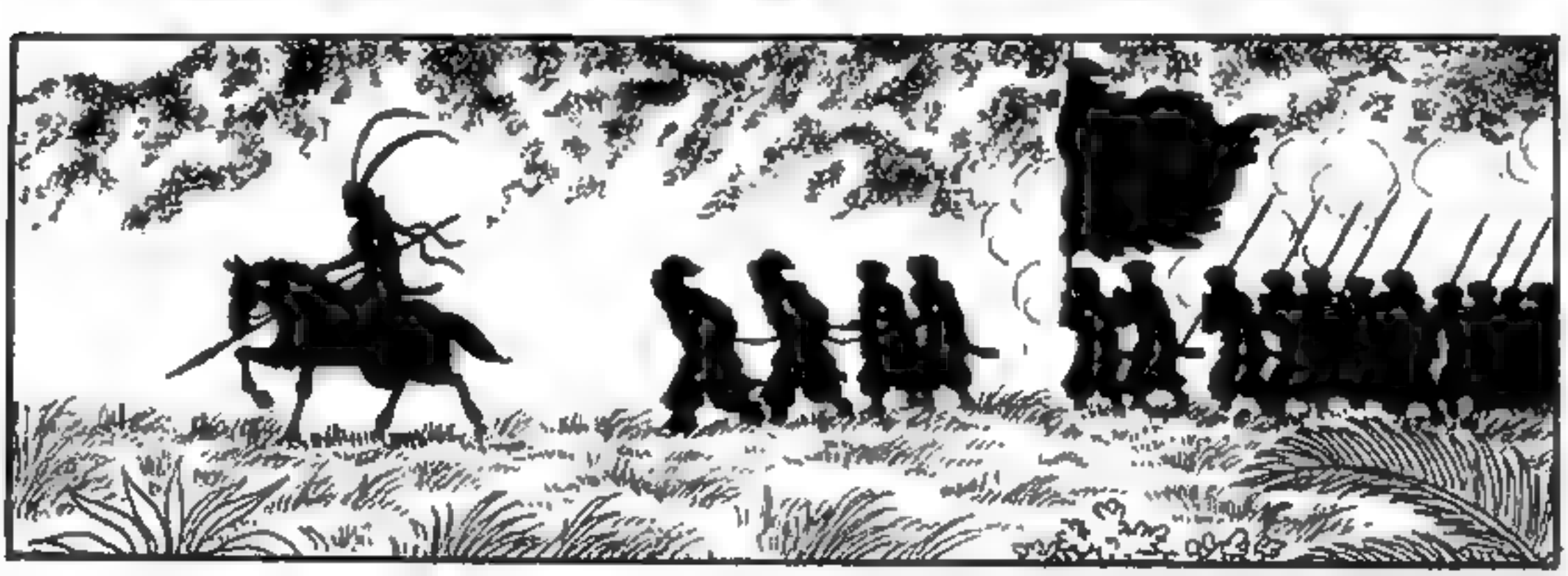





HAHA!
NGHH...


THAT'S LADY ZHURONG FOR YOU...

LET US WITHDRAW FOR TODAY.



YES, IT WAS A SPLENDID BATTLE.

SHE CAPTURED TWO ENEMY GENERALS!?

OHH! YOU LIVE UP TO YOUR STATUS AS MY WIFE AND A DESCENDANT OF ZHURONG!

KONGMING'S RELEASED ME AND MANY OTHER CHIEFS WHEN WE WERE CAUGHT.

NO, WAIT!

SHOULD WE PUT THEIR HEADS ON A PIKE AT THE GATES?

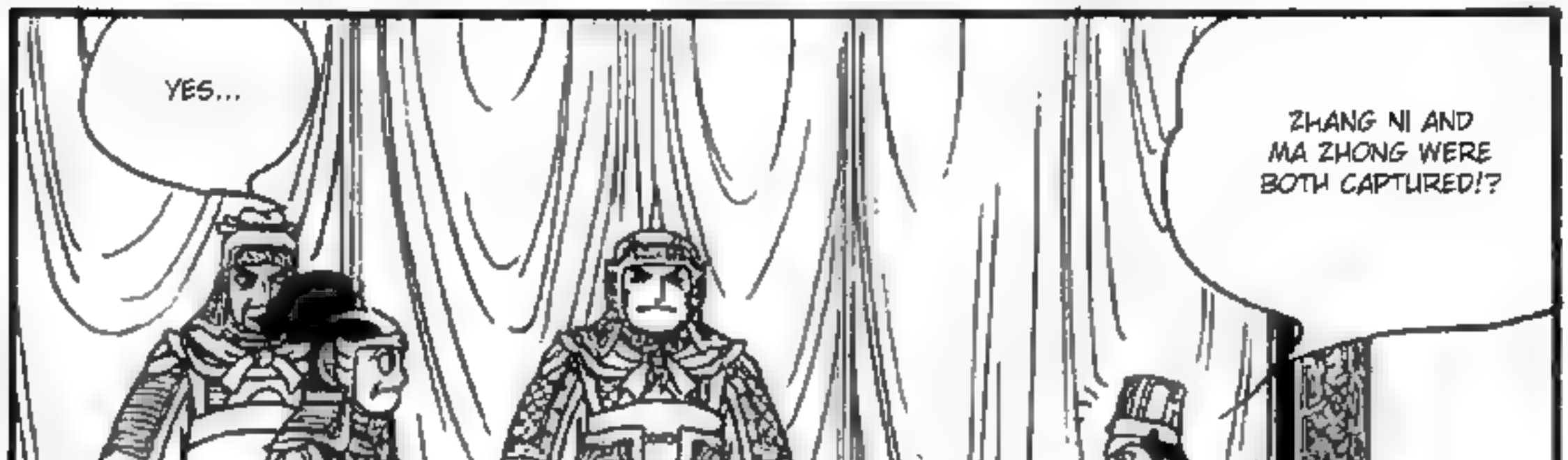
TRUE...

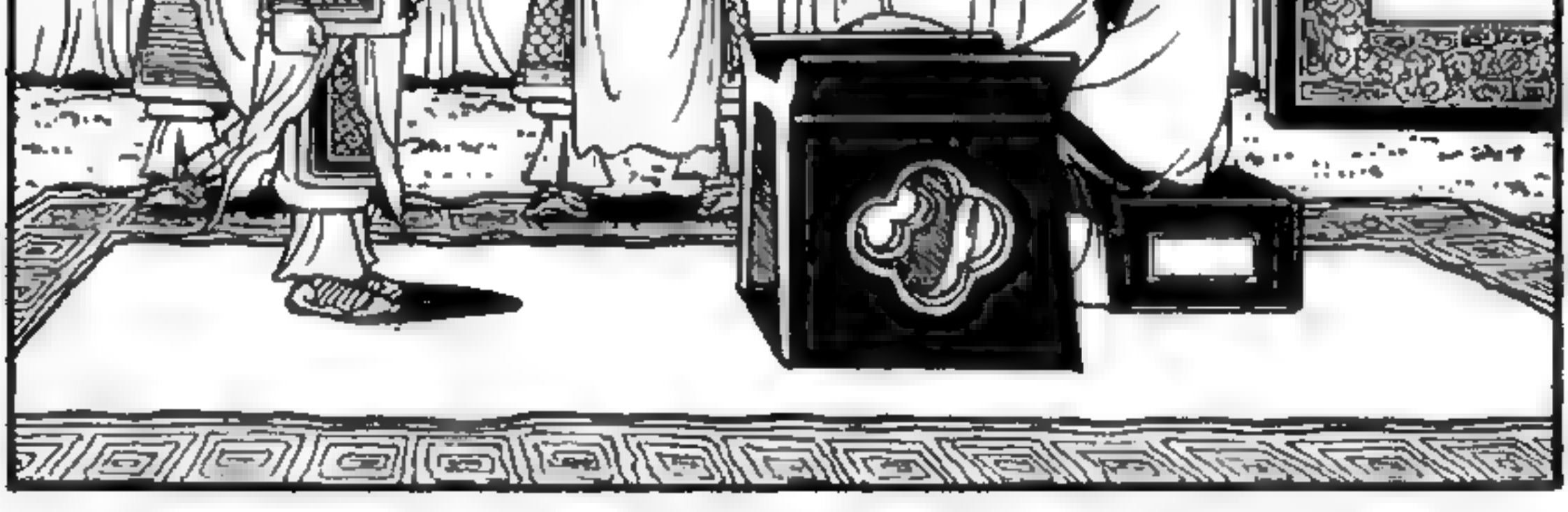
IF I WERE TO KILL HIS GENERALS ON THE FIRST CHANCE I HAD, THAT WOULD MAKE ME A PETTY MAN WHO KNOWS NO HONOUR.

IN ANY CASE, WELL DONE IN SHOWING THE ENEMIES A THING OR TWO!

YES, SIR.

LOCK THEM UP IN PRISON FOR NOW.


YES...
ZHANG NI AND MA ZHONG WERE BOTH CAPTURED!?


NO WORRIES.
I FEAR THEY MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN EXECUTED BY NOW.

MENG HUO THINKS VERY HIGHLY OF HIMSELF. AFTER HOW MANY TIMES I'VE CAUGHT AND RELEASED HIM, HE WOULD WANT TO RETURN THE FAVOUR LEST PROVE TO THE WORLD THAT HE IS THE LESSER MAN.

ZHAO ZILONG AND WEI YAN. I WANT YOU TWO TO WORK TOGETHER AND CAPTURE HER ALIVE.

HOWEVER, THIS LADY ZHURONG MUST BE SOMETHING IF SHE CAPTURED TWO OF OUR GENERALS.

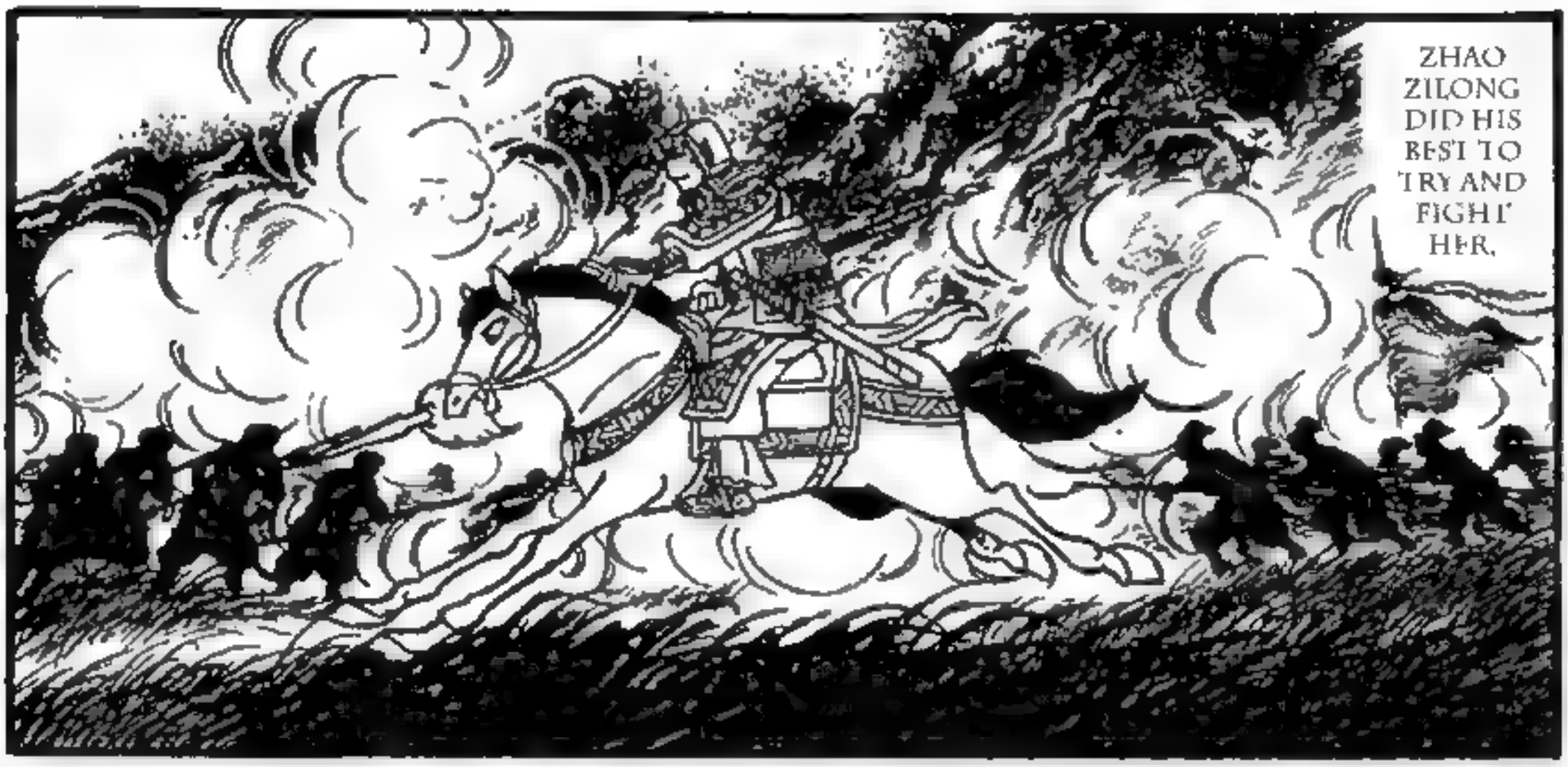
YES, SIR.

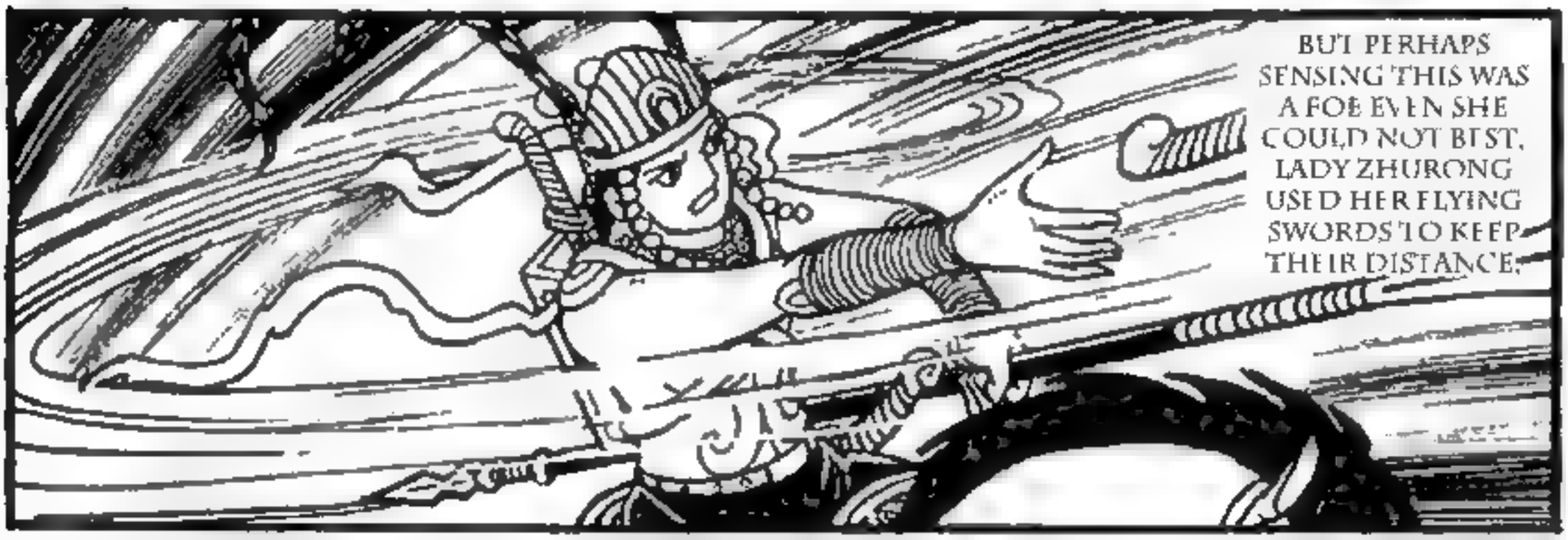
YES, SIR.

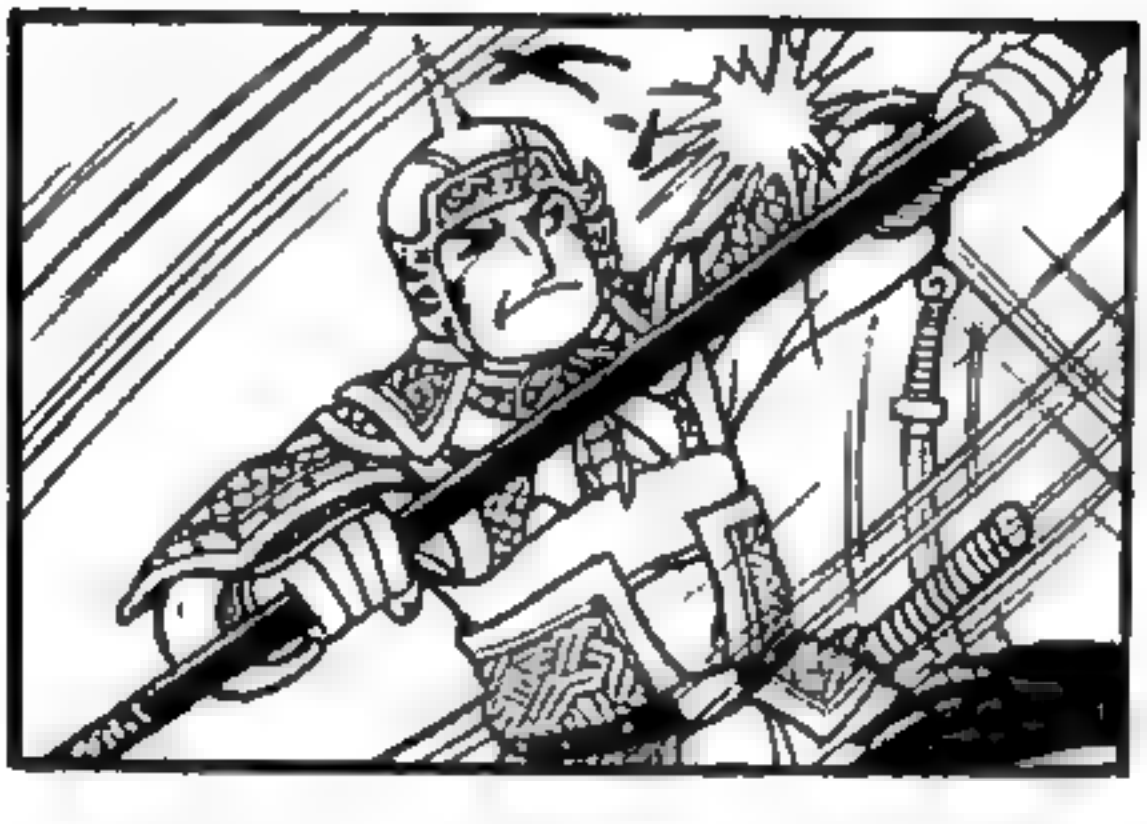
FROM THE REPORT, IT SOUNDS LIKE SHE'S QUITE CONFIDENT OF HER PROWESS. USE THAT AGAINST HER.

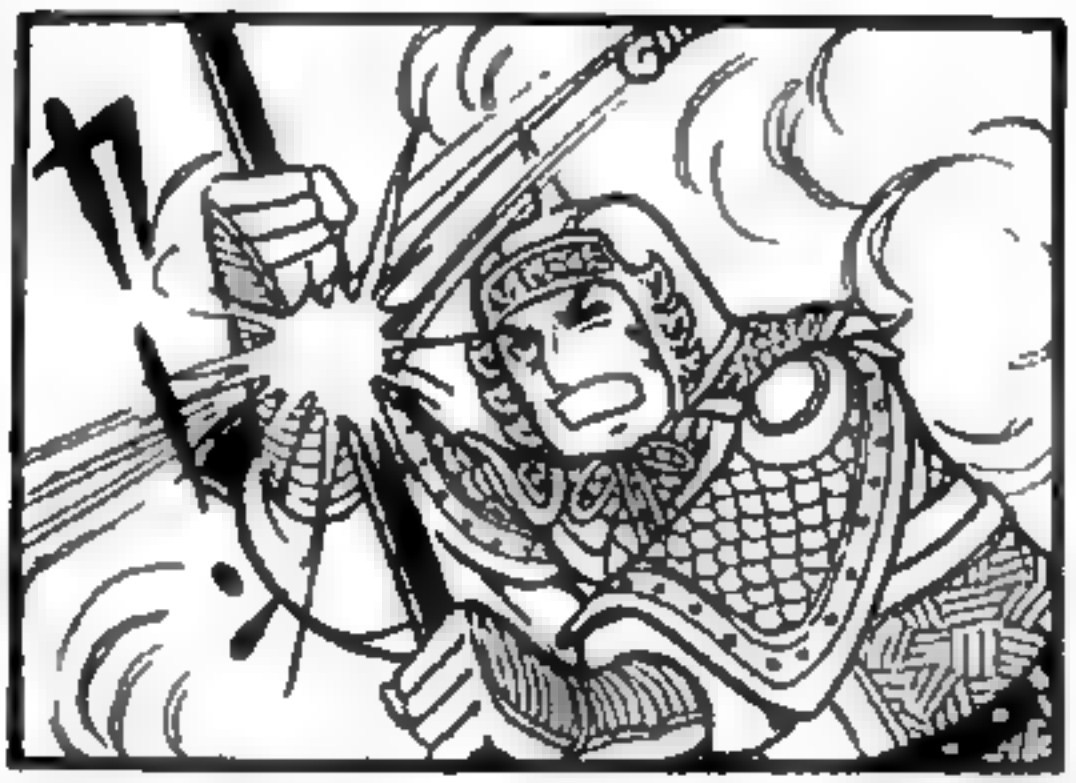
SKIRMISHES CONTINUED FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS.
IN EACH OF THESE BATTLES,

LADY ZHURONG ALWAYS LED HER TROOPS FROM THE FRONT PENETRATING INTO THE MASSES OF SHU TROOPS WITH RECKLESS FEROCITY

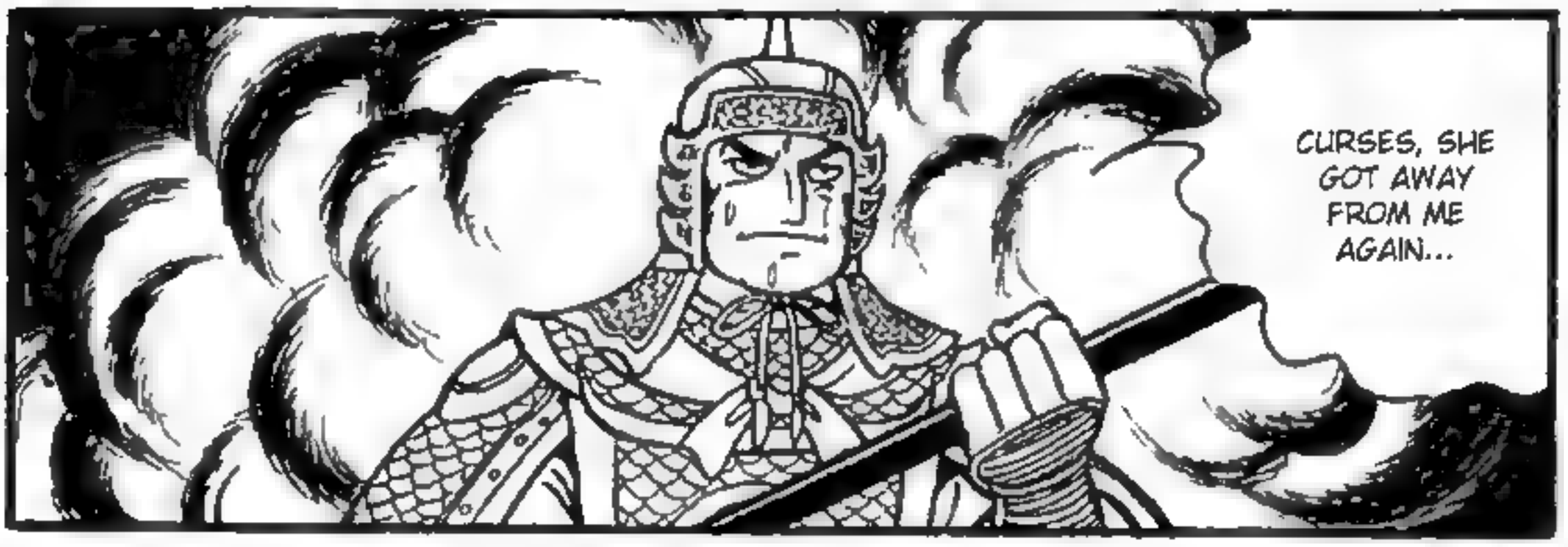

ZHAO ZILONG DID HIS BEST TO TRY AND FIGHT HER.

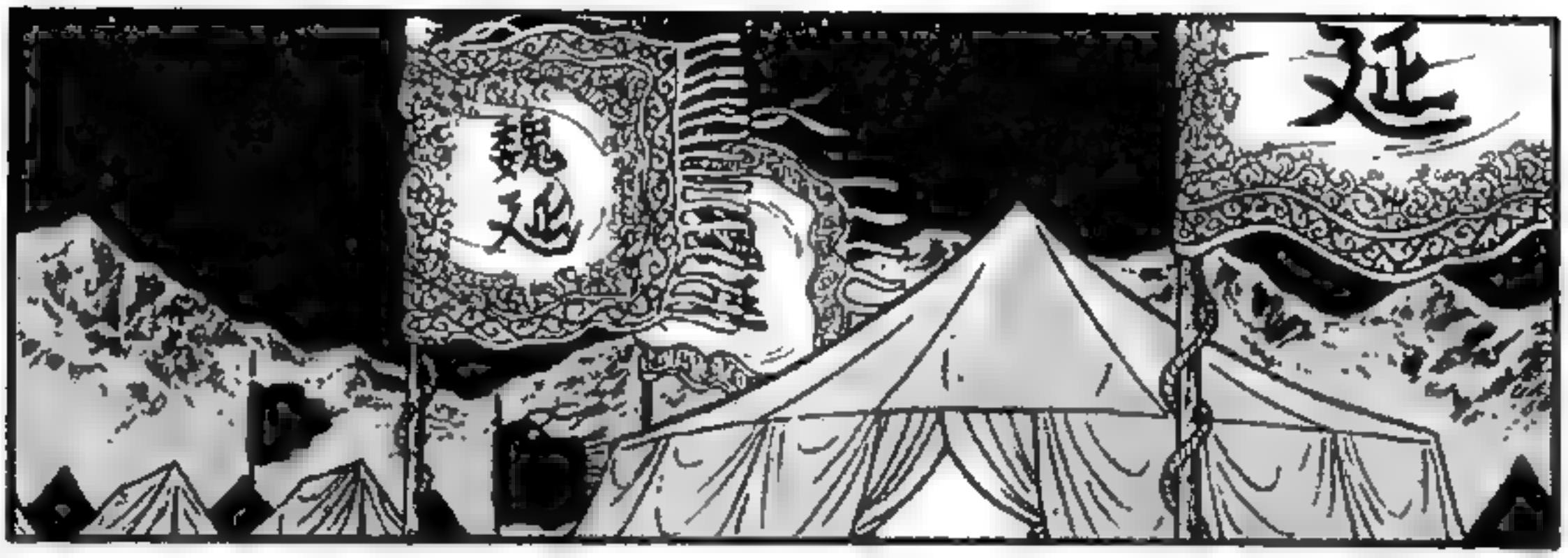

BUT PERHAPS SENSING THIS WAS A FOE EVEN SHE COULD NOT BEST, LADY ZHURONG USED HER FLYING SWORDS TO KEEP THEIR DISTANCE.





THUS THEIR FIGHTS COULD REACH NO DECISIVE END


CURSES, SHE GOT AWAY FROM ME AGAIN...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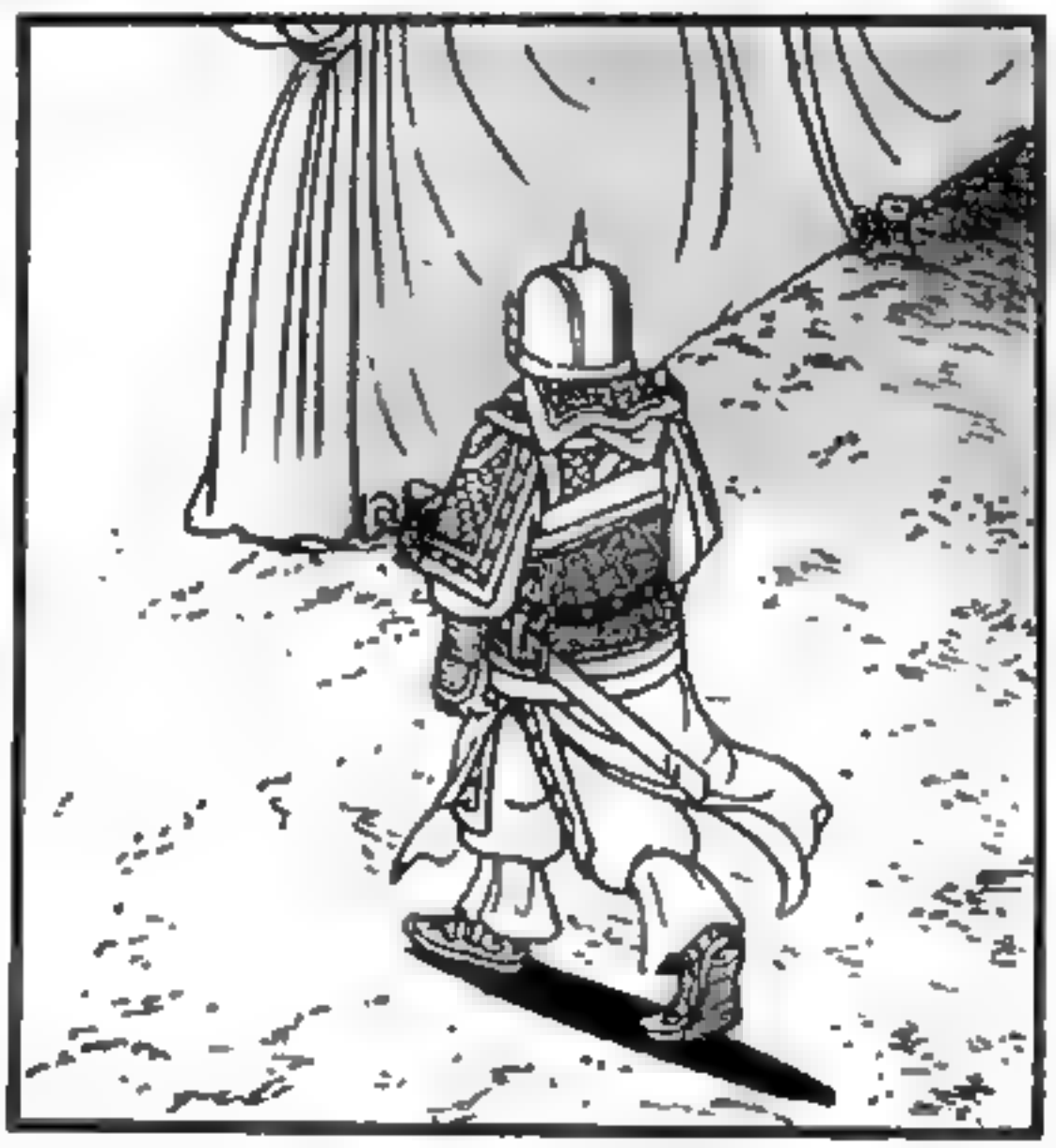
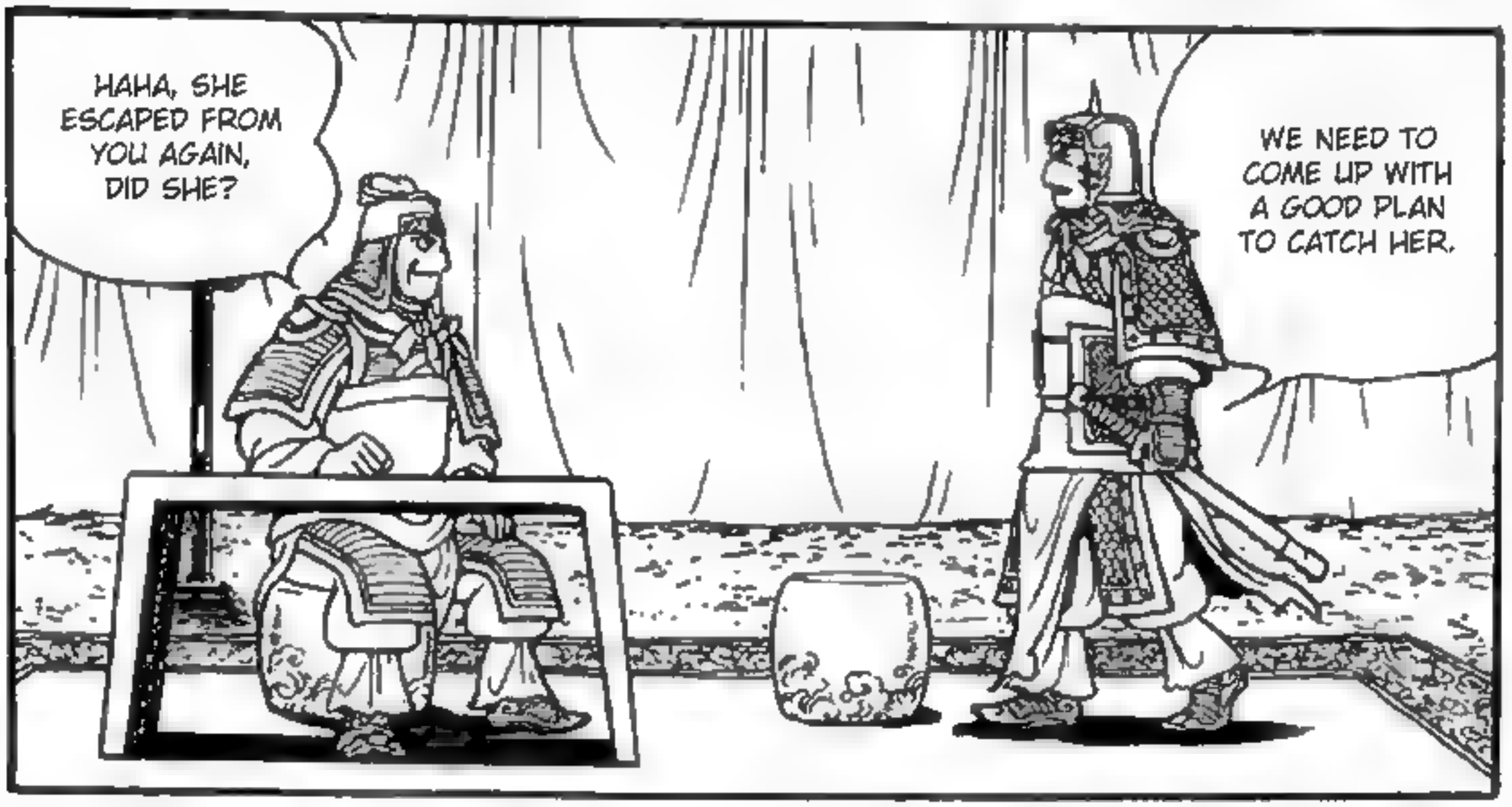
WHAT IS IT?
WEI YAN!




HAHA, SHE ESCAPED FROM YOU AGAIN, DID SHE?
WE NEED TO COME UP WITH A GOOD PLAN TO CATCH HER.

TELL ME ABOUT IT.

IT'S LIKE TRYING TO CATCH A SPARROW WITH BARE HANDS.

HEY, WHAT DO YOU THINK A WOMAN LIKE HER HATES THE MOST? I BET IT'S BEING TEASED OR PATRONIZED FOR HER GENDER.

SHE KNOWS SHE CAN HANDLE HERSELF IN BATTLE, THAT'S FOR SURE...

JUST AS THE CHANCELLOR SAID, SHE'S EXTREMELY CONFIDENT IN HER ABILITIES, TO AN EVEN RECKLESS DEGREE.

AHH, NOW YOU'RE TALKING!

I SAY WE TEASE HER INTO COMING TOO DEEP ON OUR SIDE, AND THEN SPRING A TRAP...

LADY SPARROW?

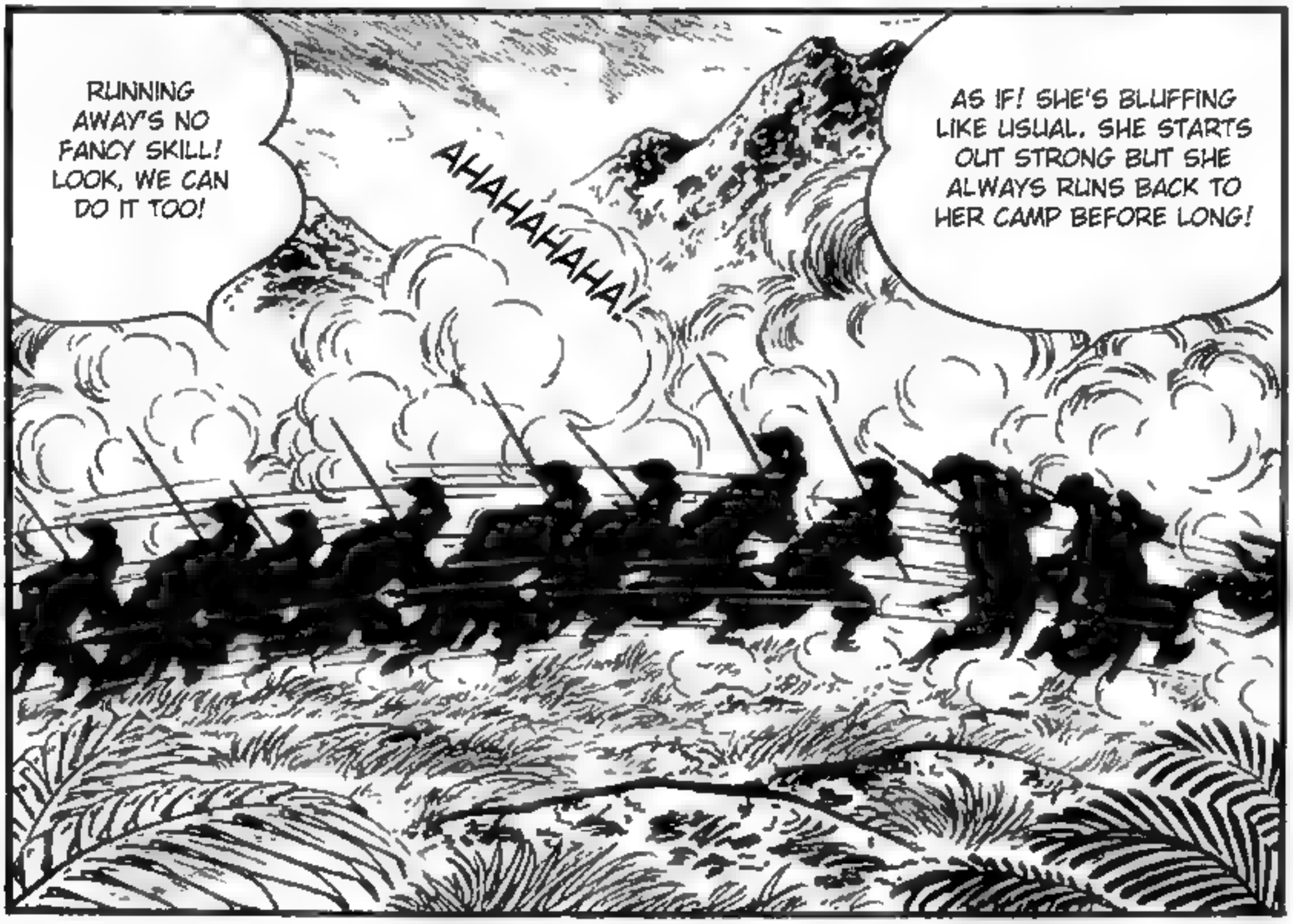
HEY, IT'S LADY SPARROW!

WHAT!?

FLUTTERING LEFT AND RIGHT ACROSS THE BATTLEFIELD LIKE A CUTE LITTLE SPARROW!

OH NOOOO, SAVE ME! THE LITTLE SPARROW'S COMING FOR US!

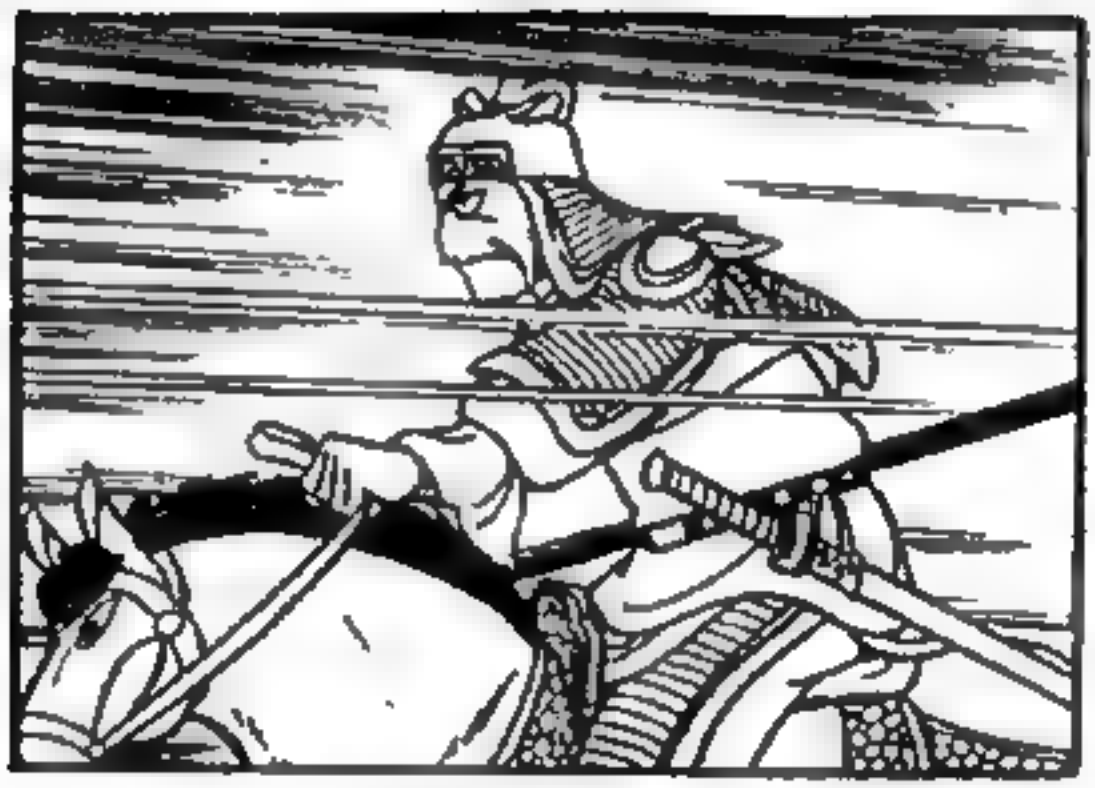
I'LL HAVE YOU EAT THOSE WORDS!


RUNNING AWAY'S NO FANCY SKILL! LOOK, WE CAN DO IT TOO!
AHAHAHAHA!
AS IF! SHE'S BLUFFING LIKE USUAL. SHE STARTS OUT STRONG BUT SHE ALWAYS RUNS BACK TO HER CAMP BEFORE LONG!

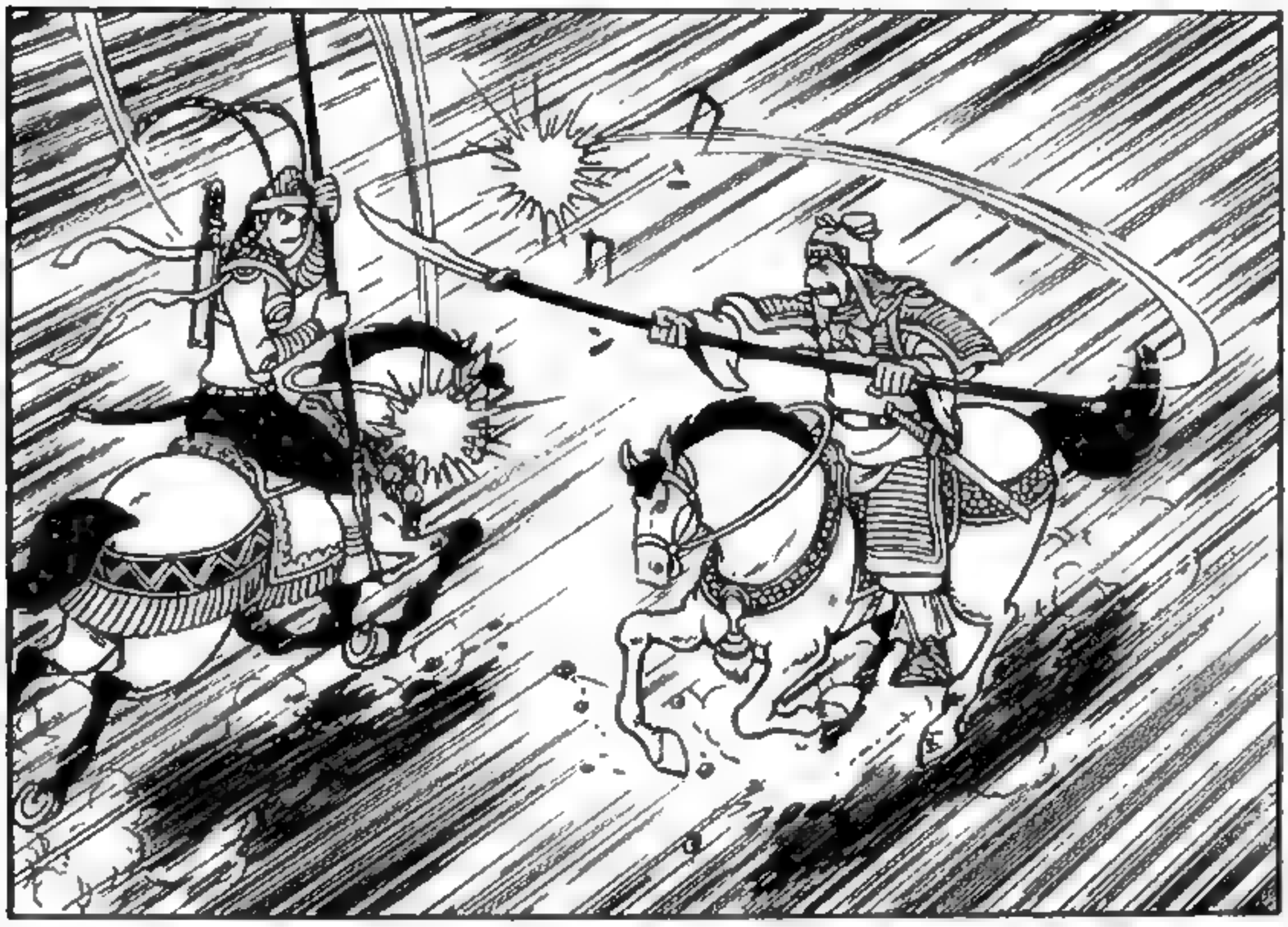
HOLD IT!

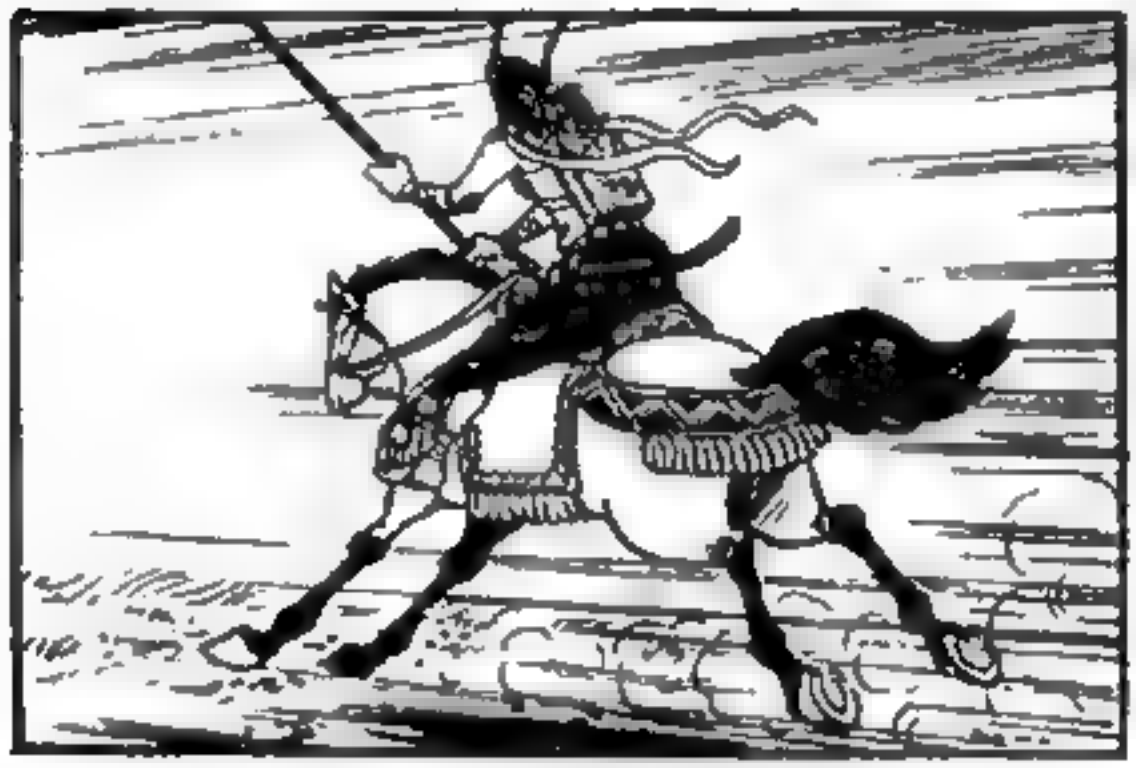
NGH...

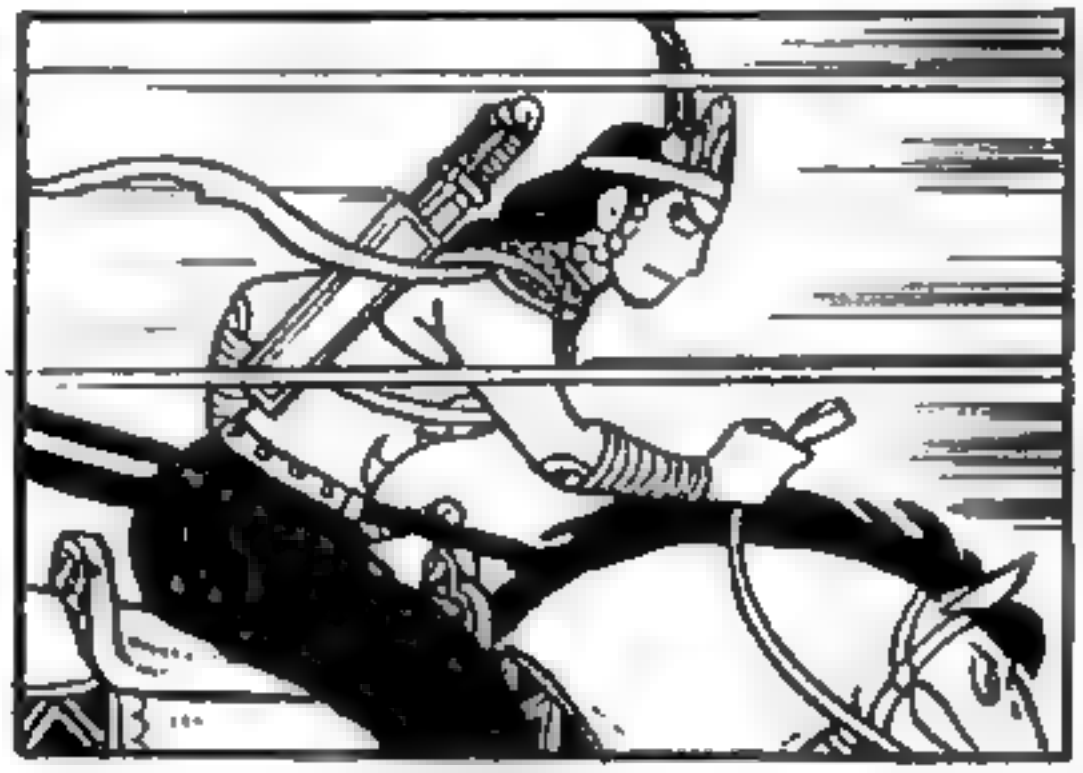
HEY, SHE CHASED US THIS DEEP FOR THE FIRST TIME!

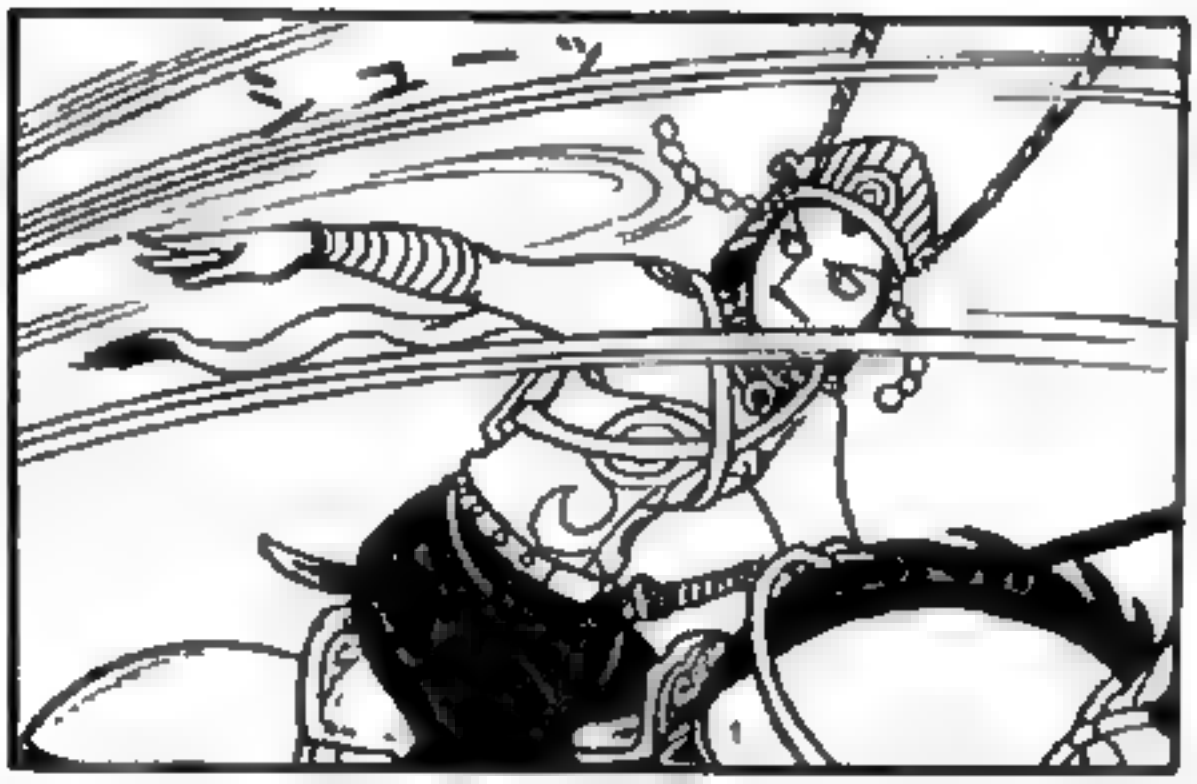


LADY SPARROW, I WON'T RUN. FIGHT ME IF YOU DARE.



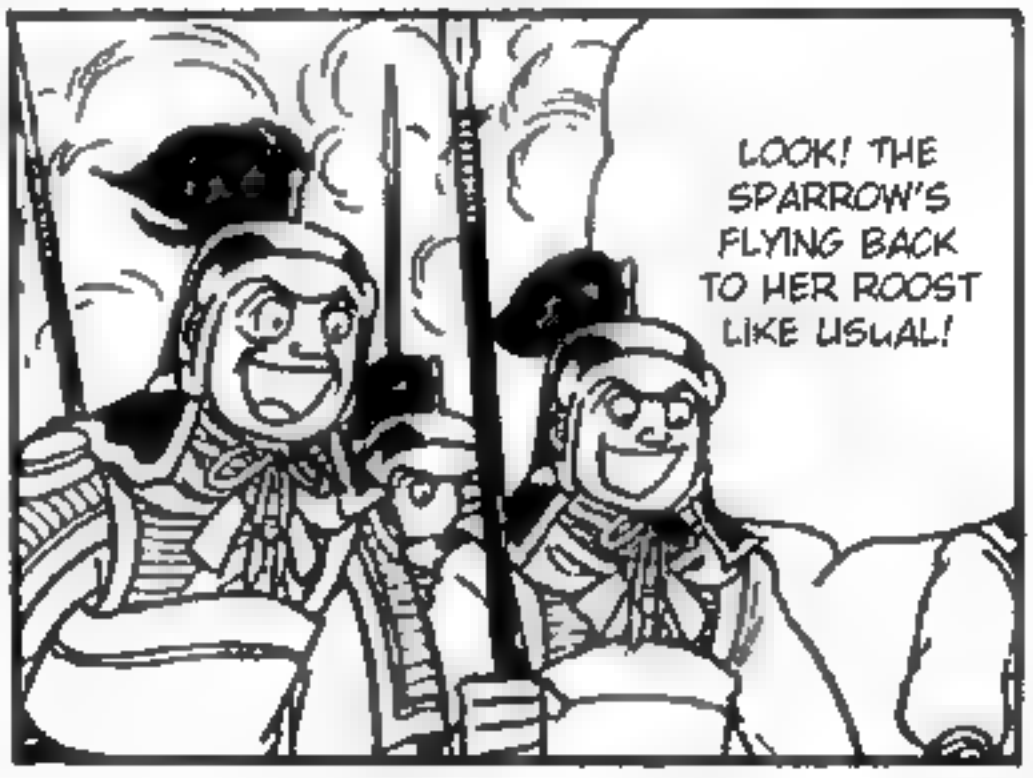


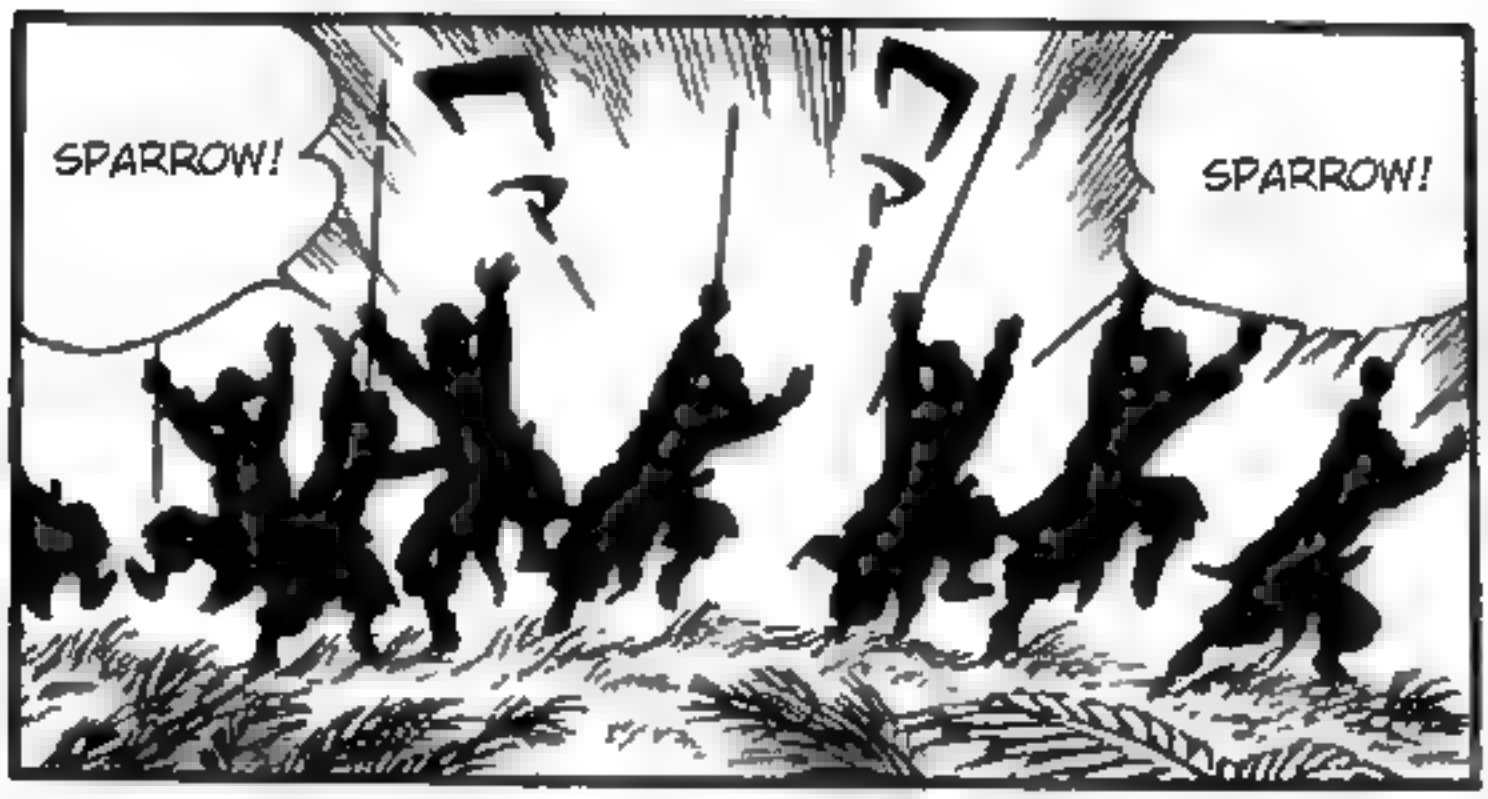




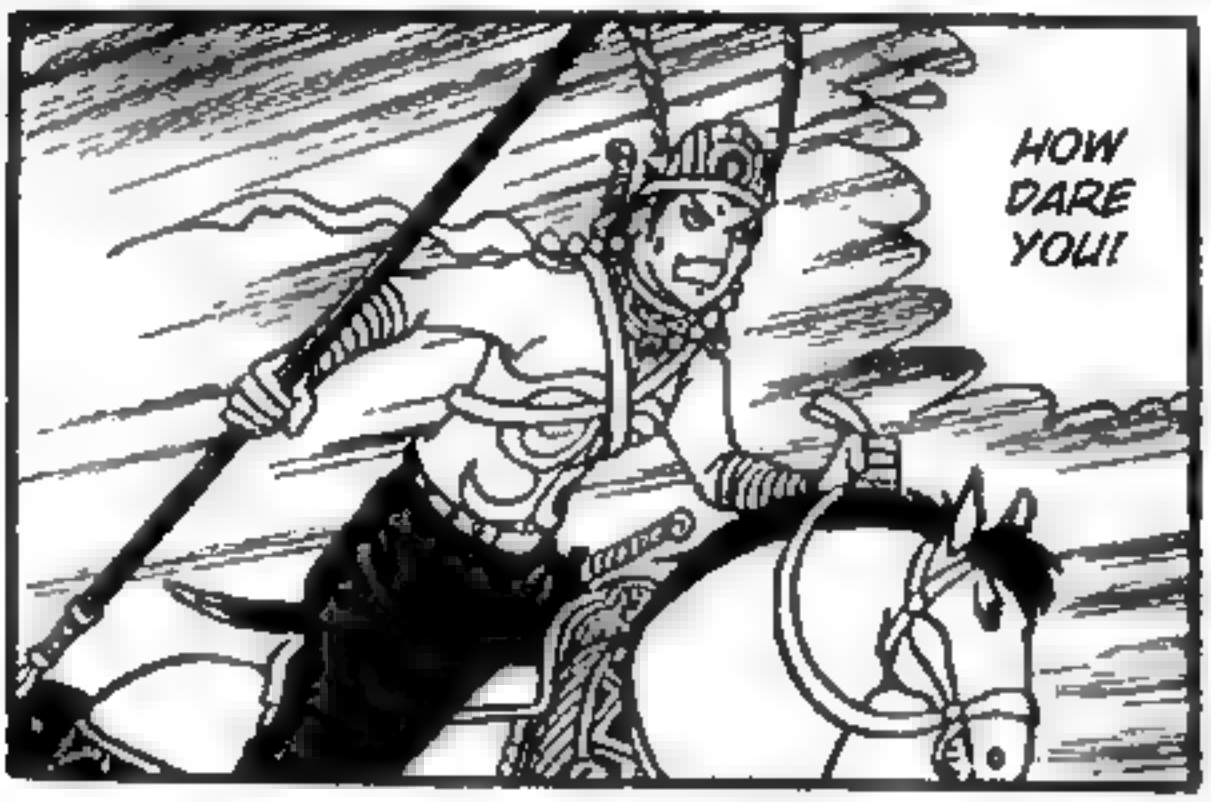
YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY!

HAHA! WHAT DO YOU EXPECT? SHE'S JUST A GIRL, AFTER ALL!


LOOK! THE SPARROW'S FLYING BACK TO HER ROOST LIKE USUAL!

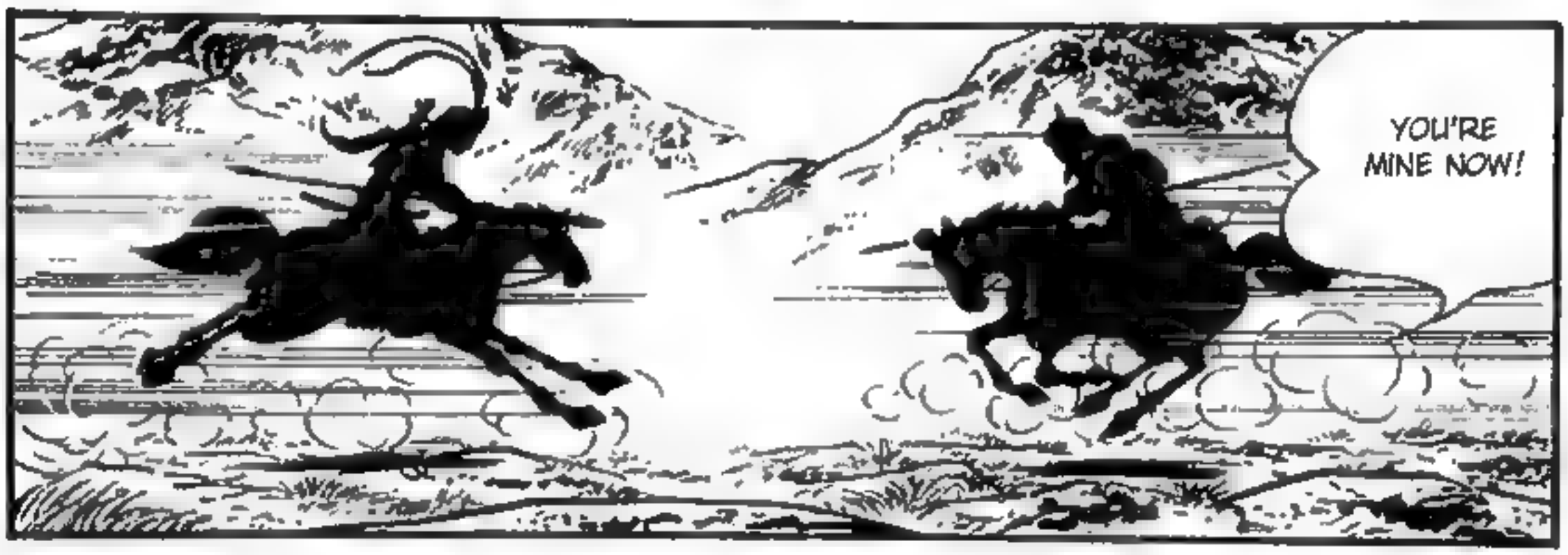

SPARROW!
SPARROW!

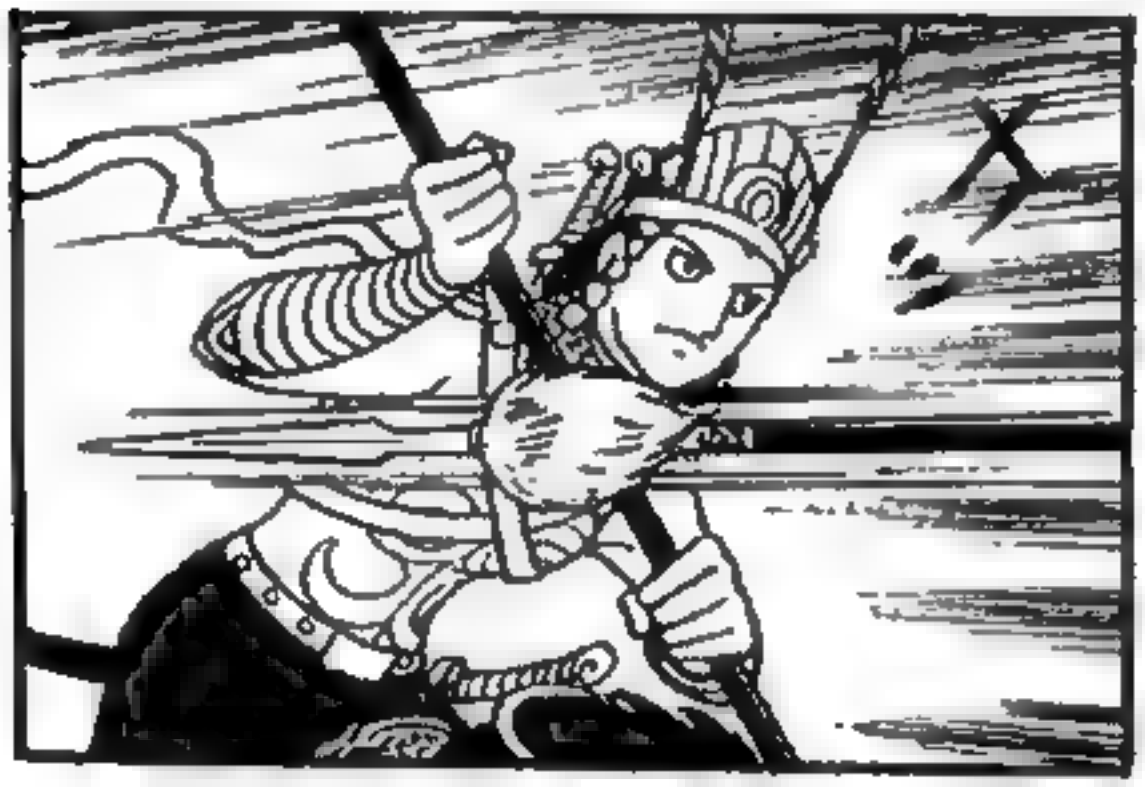
WHAT!?

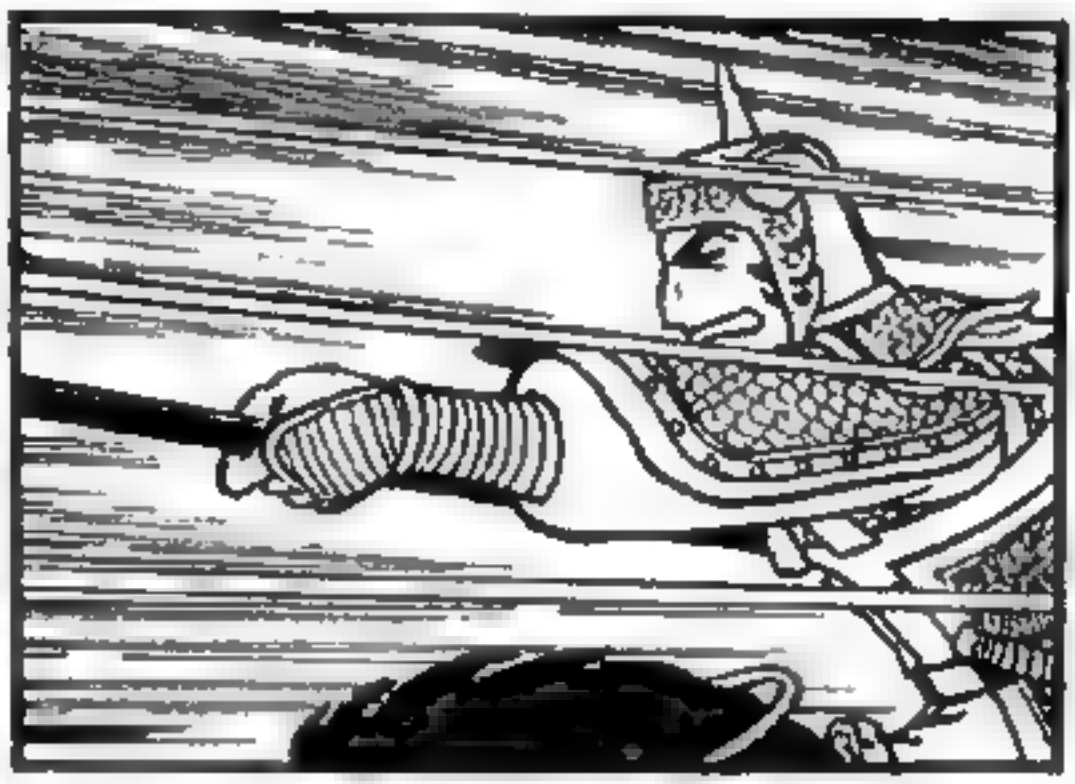

HOW DARE YOU!

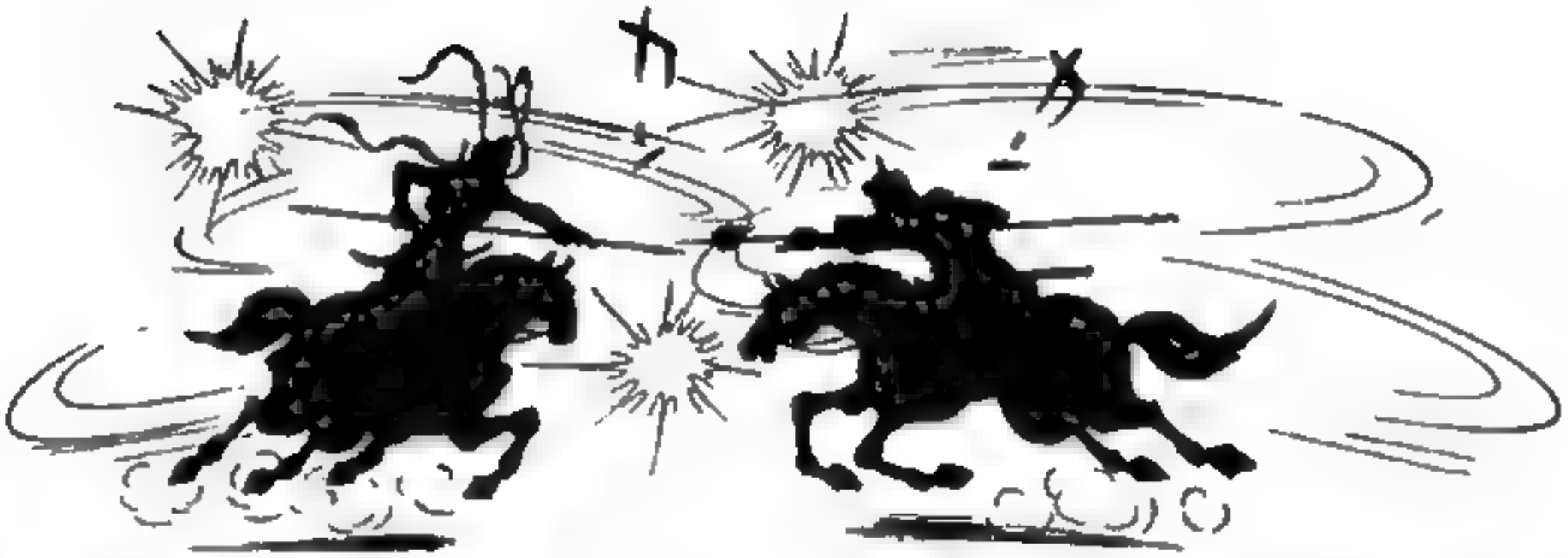
THE BLOOD OF ZHURONG RUNS IN ME!

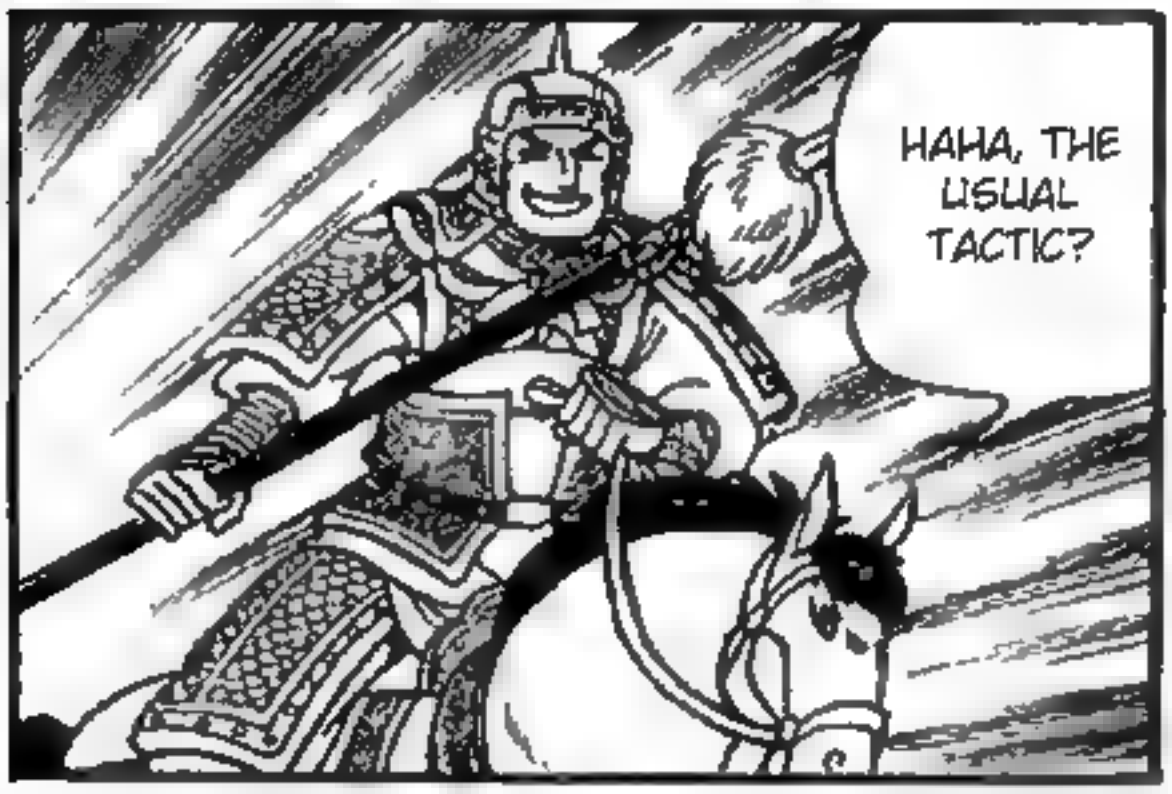
I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU, LADY SPARROW.

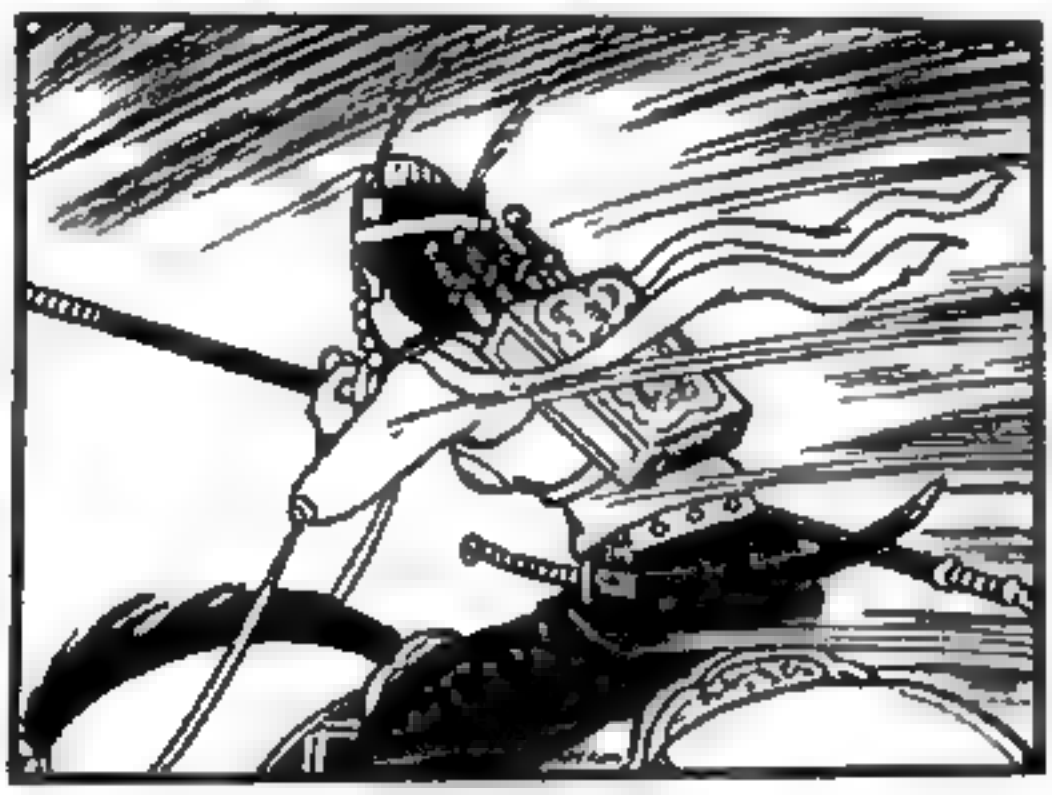

YOU'RE MINE NOW!

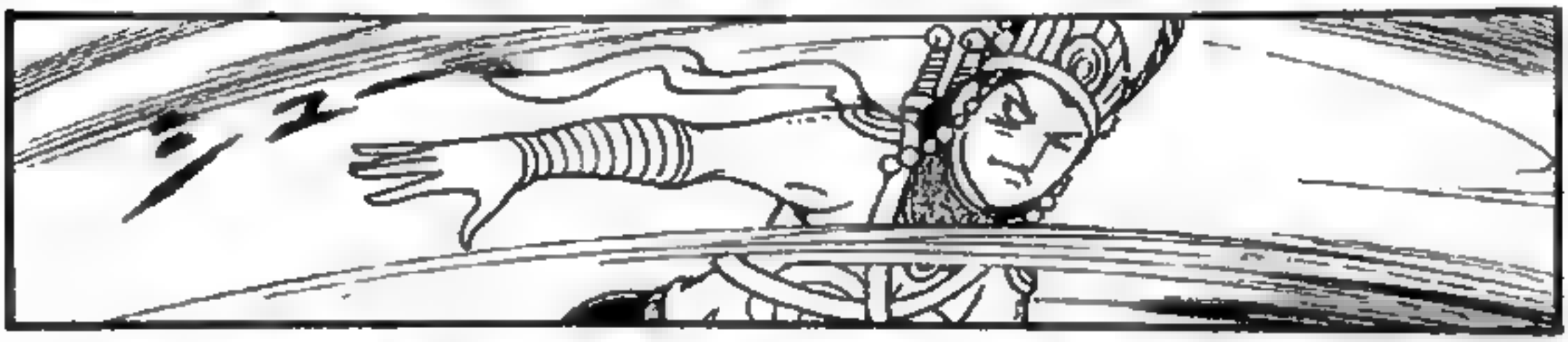


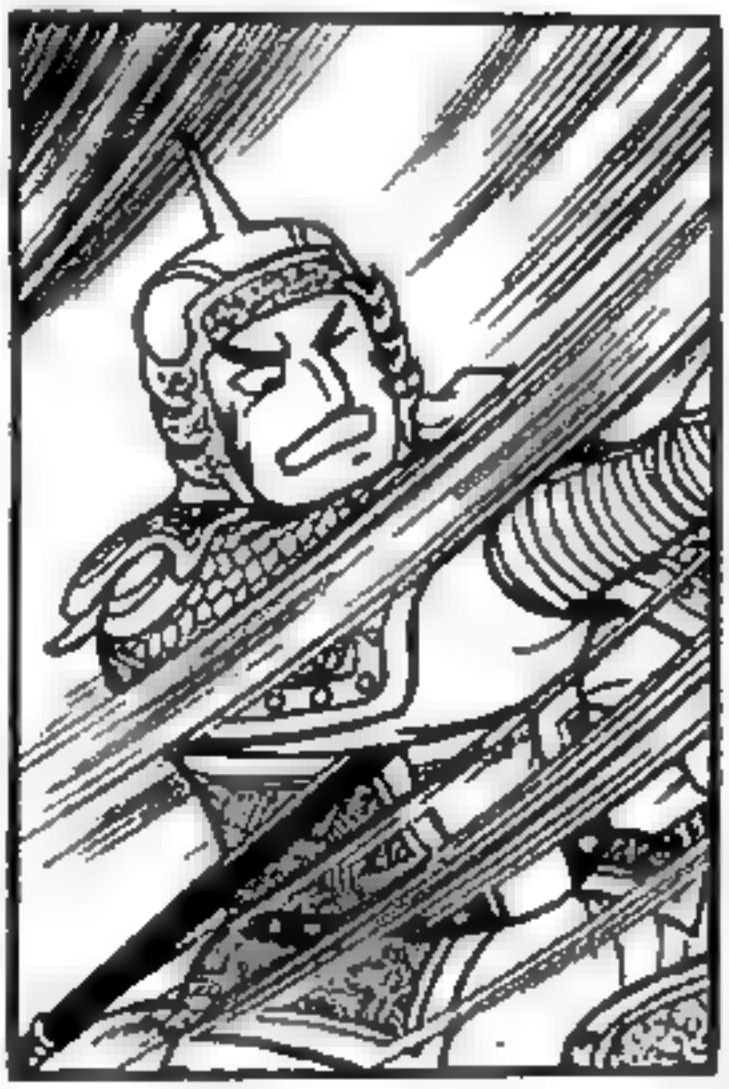




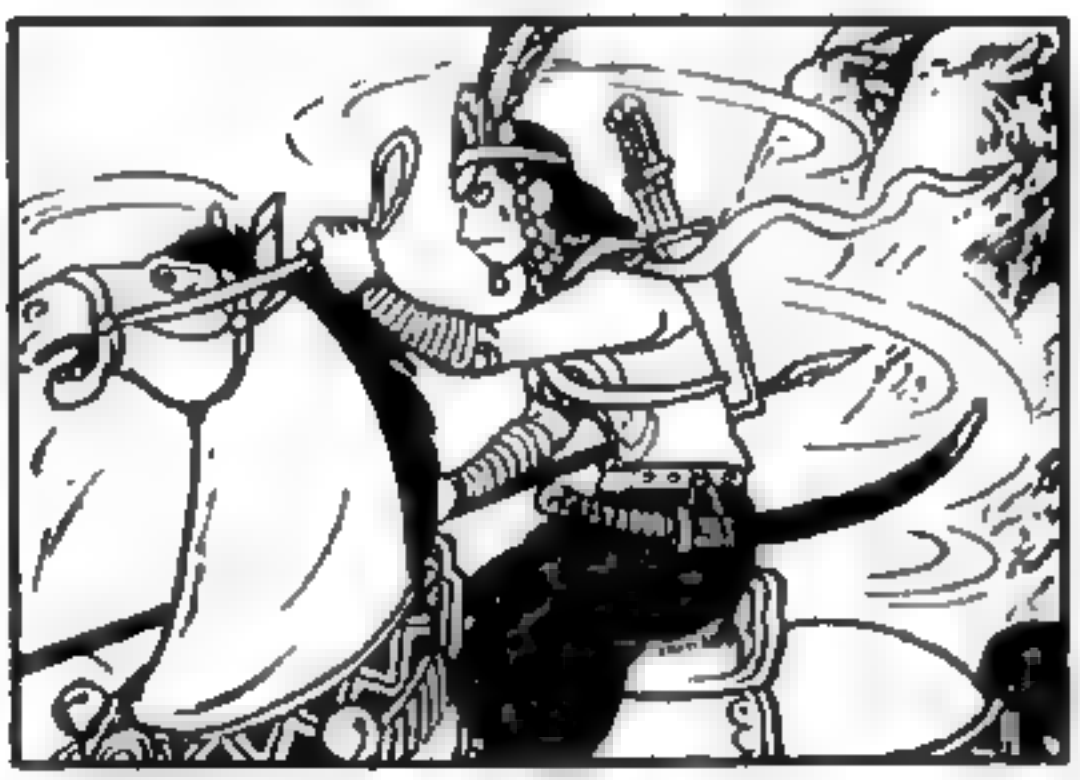

HAHA, THE USUAL TACTIC?

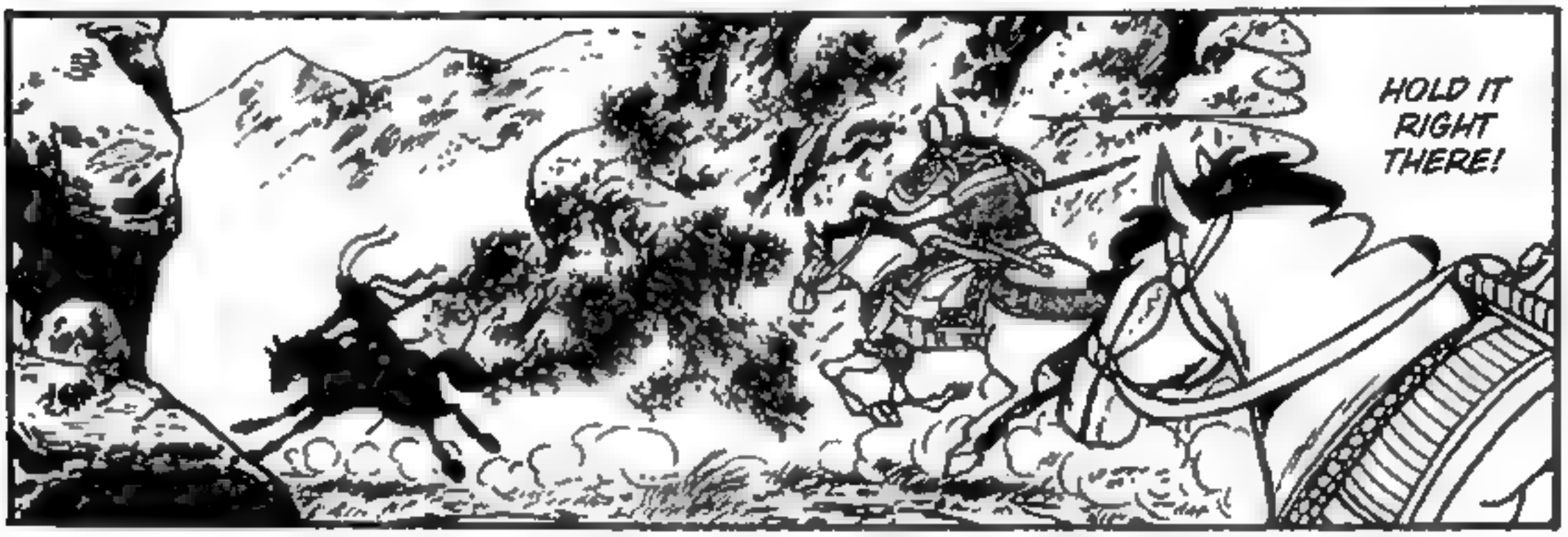




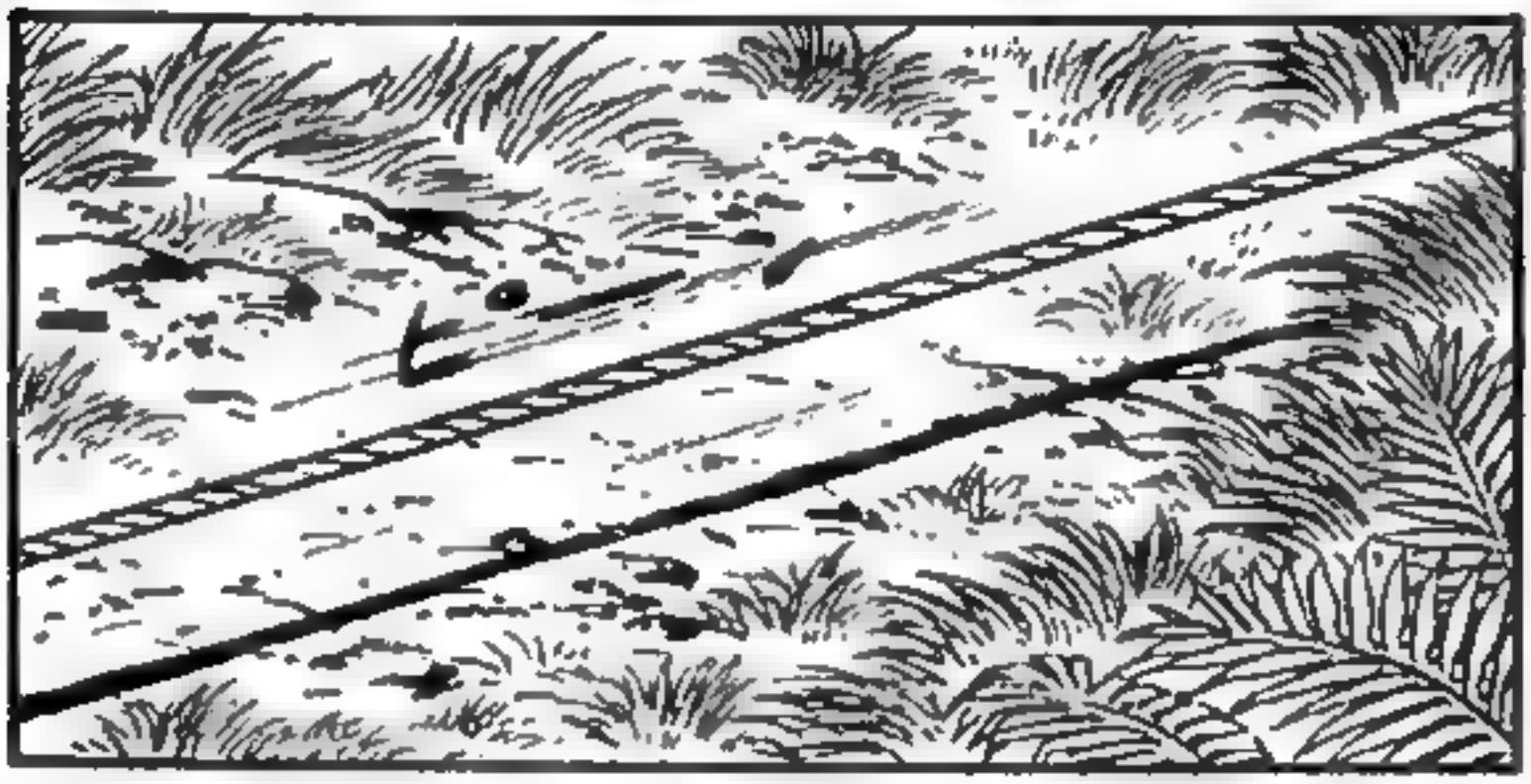


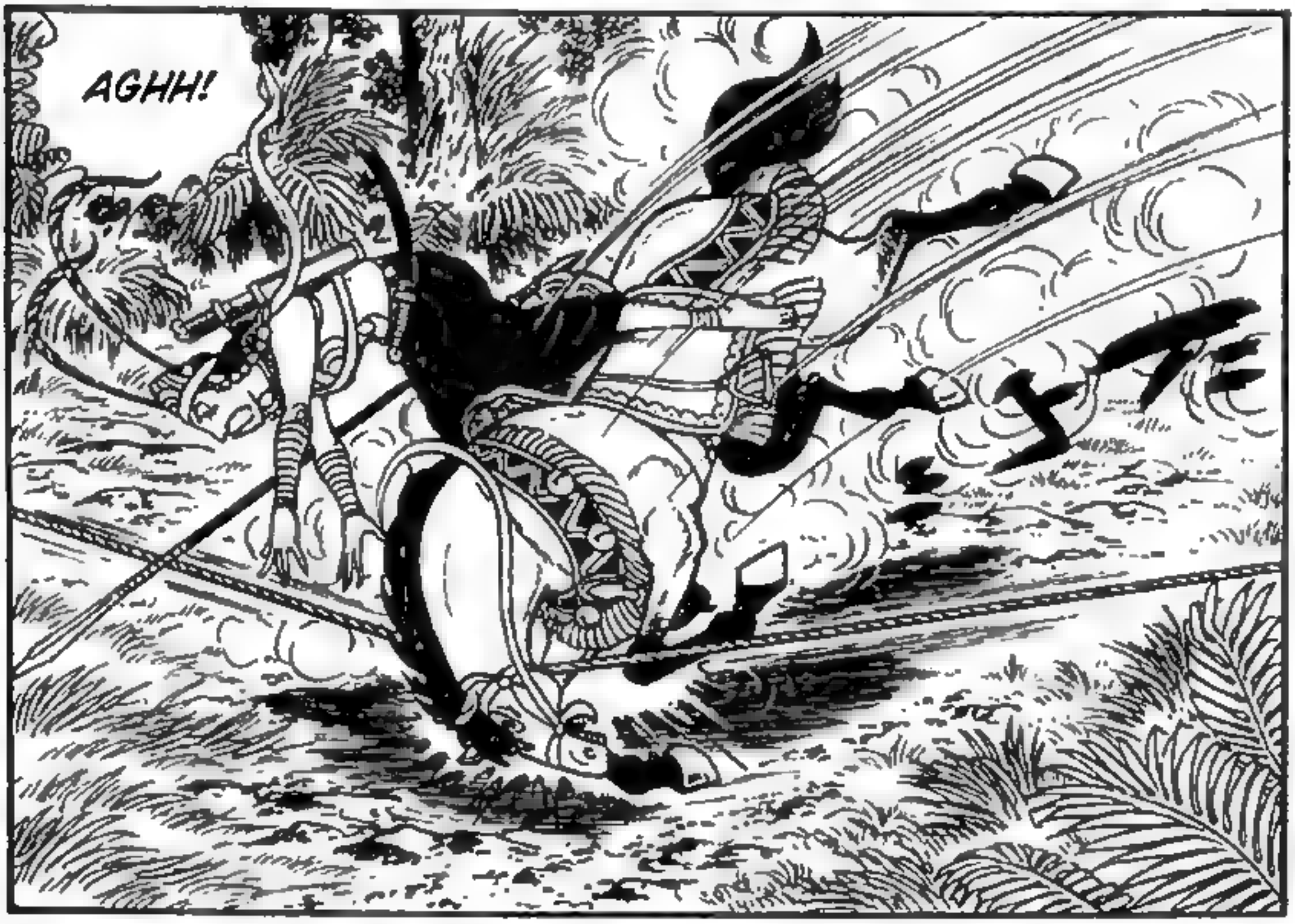
AHH!
ENOUGH RUNNING AWAY, LADY SPARROW.




HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!

HERE SHE COMES

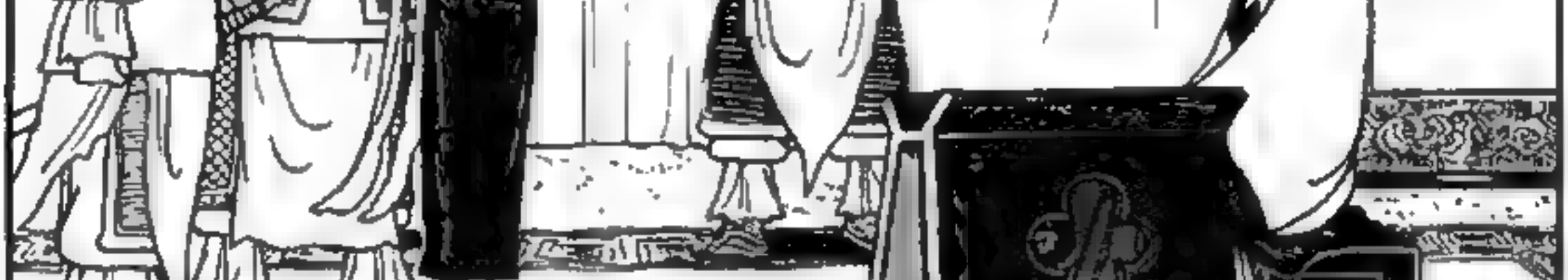



AGHH!

NOW!

HAHA! WE'VE CAUGHT THE SPARROW AT LAST!

WELL DONE IN CAPTURING HER.


YES, SIR.
UNTIE HER ROPES.

BY THAT, I MEAN THE BURDEN OF KINGSHIP.

HEAR ME CAREFULLY, LADY ZHURONG. WE HAVE NOT COME TO OPPRESS YOUR PEOPLE, BUT EDUCATE YOU ON PROPER GOVERNENCE.

IF ONLY MENG HUO COULD UNDERSTAND THAT, I WOULD NOT HESITATE TO WITHDRAW MY ARMY BACK TO SHU.

THE RIGHTFUL KING IS NOT SELFISHLY CONCERNED WITH HIS GLORY, BUT RATHER THE WELL-BEING OF HIS PEOPLE. TO MAKE WAR PURELY TO ENRICH THE KING PARADOXICALLY IMPOVERISHES THE PEOPLE.

WE WILL EAT WHAT WE PLEASE, WE WILL TAKE WHAT WE PLEASE, AND WE WILL KILL WHOEVER WE PLEASE!

WHAT A FARCE! THIS IS OUR LAND, AND WE WILL DO WHATEVER WE PLEASE HERE!

SINCE YOU ARE HIS WIFE, I KINDLY ASK YOU TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT THIS MATTER.

THE SOLDIERS YOU COMMAND HAVE WIVES, CHILDREN, AND MOTHERS. DO YOU REALLY THINK THEY ALL DESIRE WAR AS MUCH AS YOU DO?

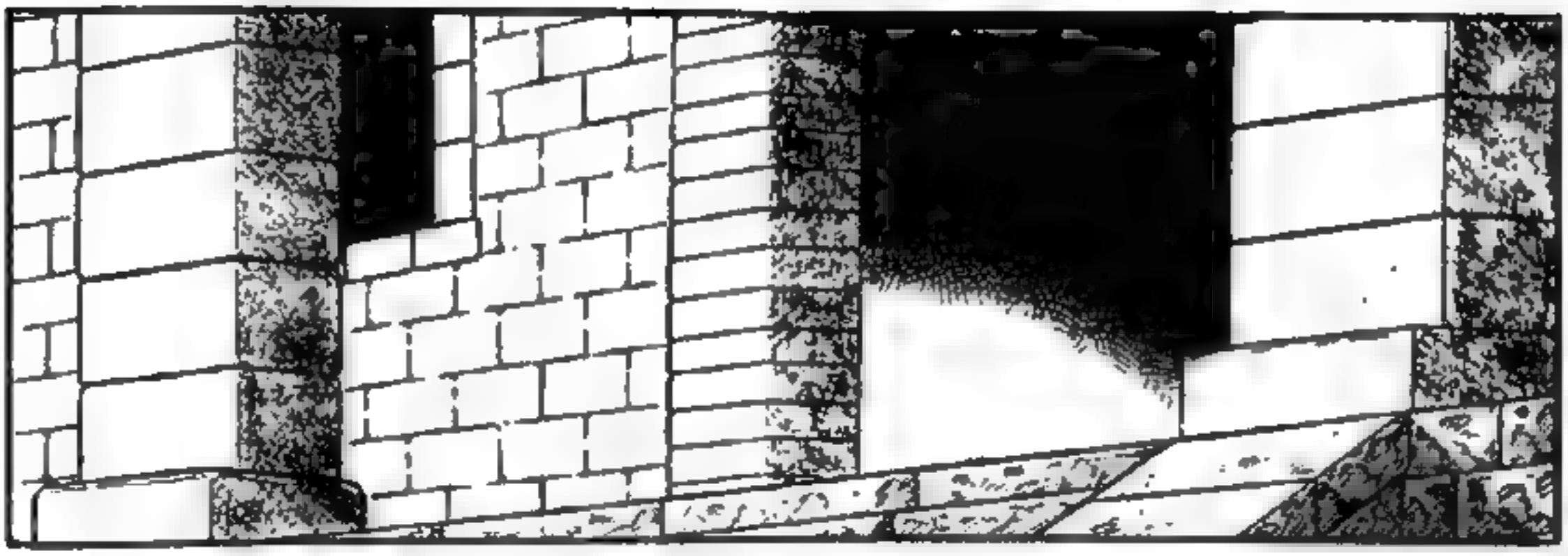
THE WORLD WOULD BE A BLOODBATH IF EVERY MAN'S DESIRE WAS LEFT TO RUN AMOK.

WE HAVE OUR OWN WAYS OF LIFE DOWN HERE!

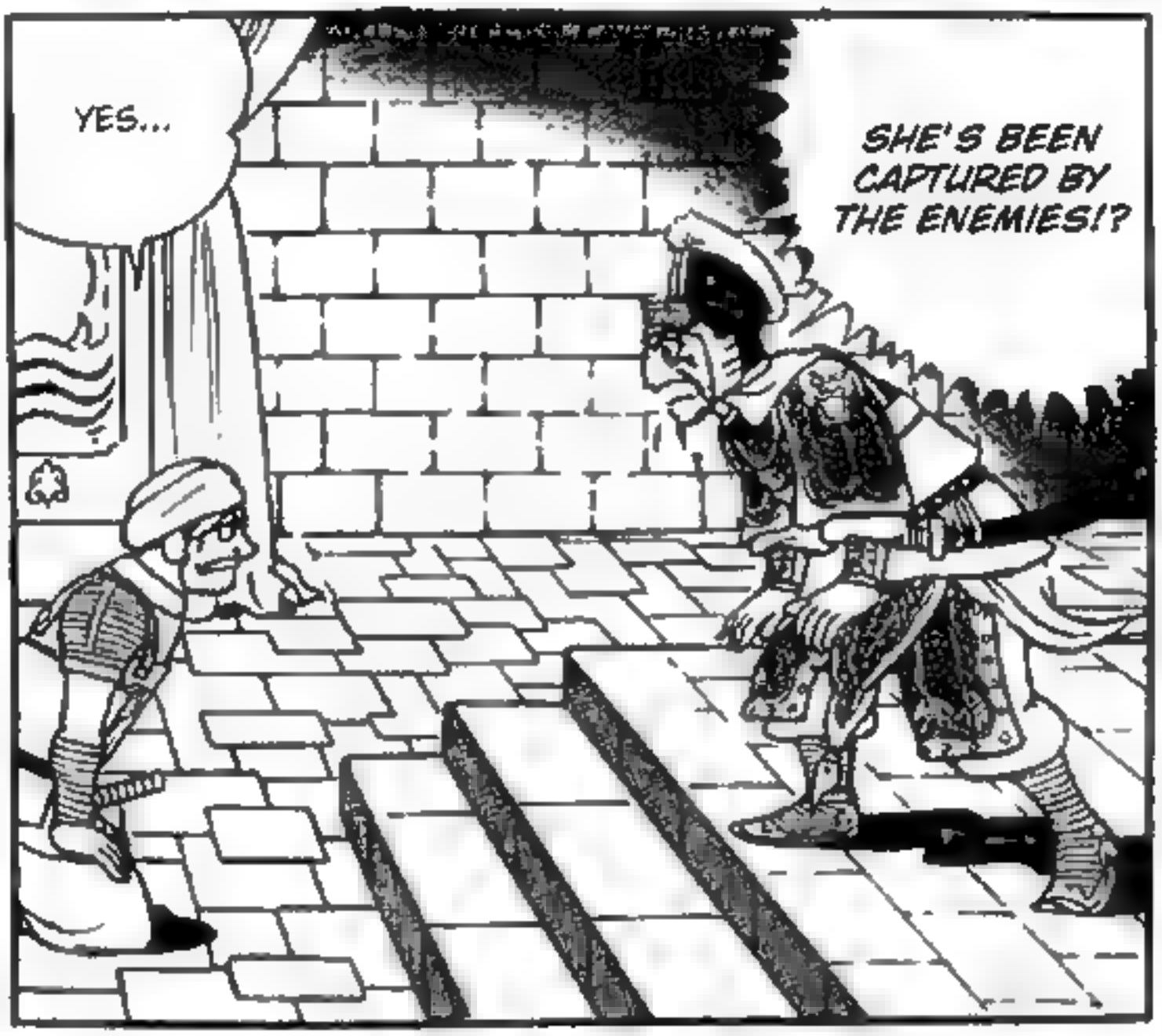
I WILL NOT BE LECTURED ON FOREIGN CUSTOMS IN NANMAN LANDS!

A KING'S LEGITIMACY COMES FROM HIS ABILITY TO LOOK AFTER HIS SUBJECTS.

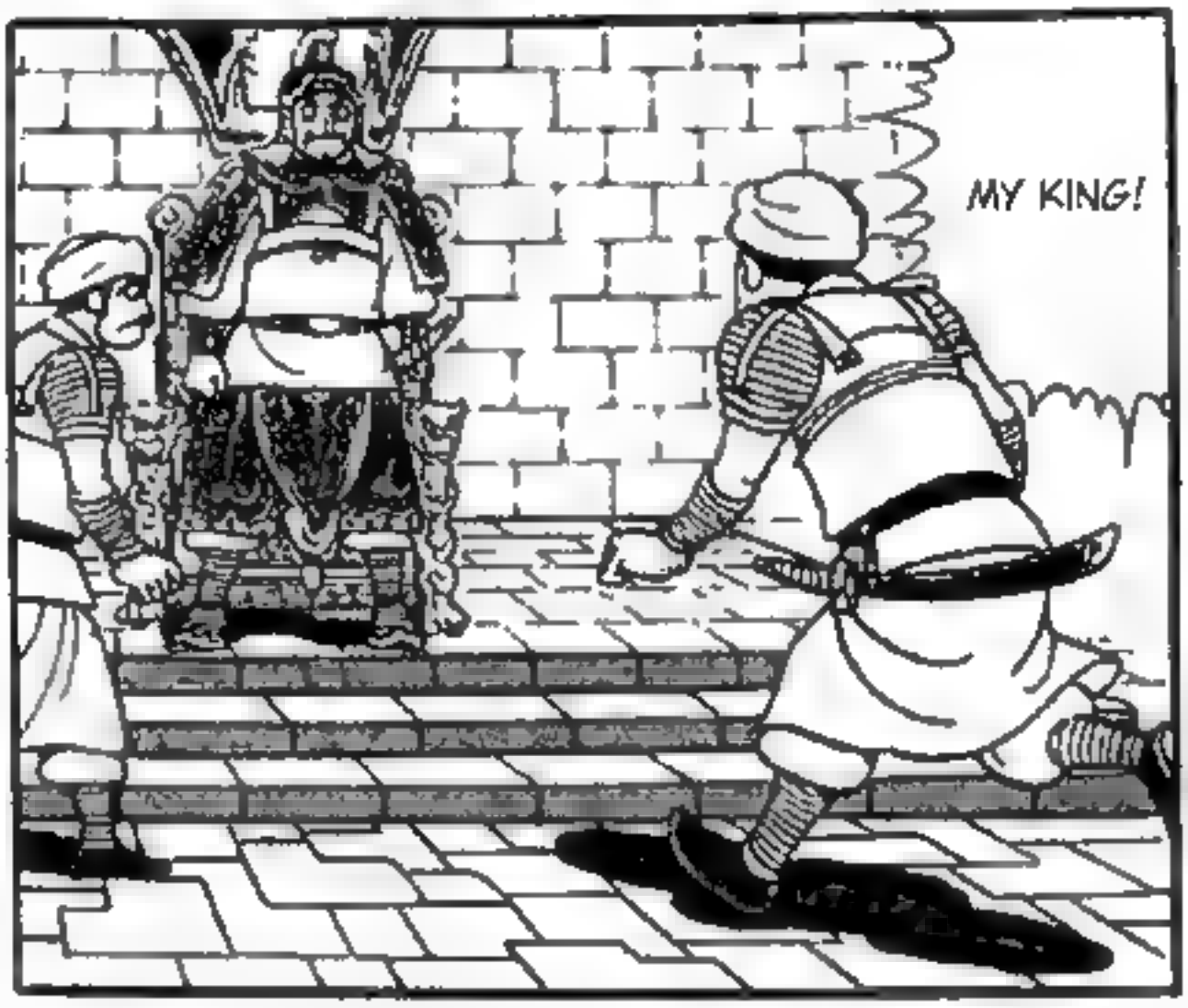
NOW BEHEAD ME OR WHATEVER! I AM NOT AFRAID OF DEATH!

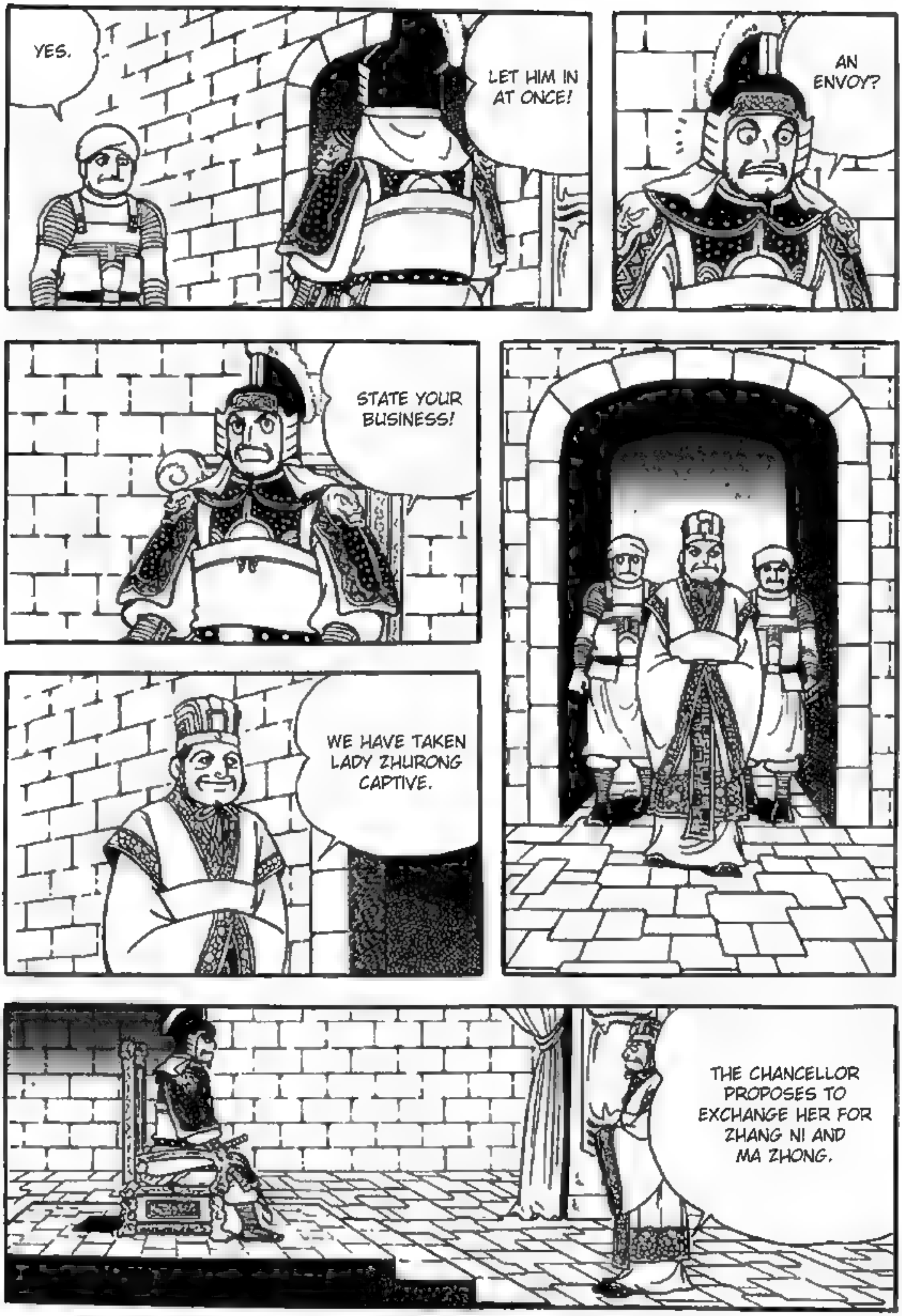


THIS IS... THIS IS TERRIBLE...


YES...
SHE'S BEEN CAPTURED BY THE ENEMIES!?

A SHU ENVOY WISHES TO SPEAK WITH YOU. WILL YOU SEE HIM?


MY KING!


YES.
LET HIM IN AT ONCE!
AN ENVOY?
STATE YOUR BUSINESS!
WE HAVE TAKEN LADY ZHURONG CAPTIVE.
THE CHANCELLOR PROPOSES TO EXCHANGE HER FOR ZHANG NI AND MA ZHONG.

VERY WELL. I'LL RETURN THOSE WORTHLESS FOOLS FOR MY WIFE.

A HOSTAGE EXCHANGE?

EXACTLY, SIR.

AND SO, AT THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE NANMAN CAPITAL, THE TWO SIDES EXCHANGED HOSTAGES PEACEFULLY

KING MU LU

AS FRUSTRATING AS IT IS, I ADMIT YOUR EXCUSES HAD A POINT.
I TOLD YOU THE ENEMIES THIS TIME WERE LIKE NO OTHER WE'VE FACED BEFORE.

YES, KONGMING IS LIKELY PREPARING FOR THAT AS WE SPEAK...

STILL, WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING OR THEY'LL SOON CAPTURE OUR CAPITAL.

MY LITTLE BROTHER IS BACK?

HE IS!?

THE MESSENGER WE SENT TO KING MU LU HAS JUST RETURNED.

CALL HIM HERE AT ONCE.

YES, YES, GET TO THE POINT. WHAT DID MU LU SAY?

I'VE RETURNED FROM BANA RAVINE, SIR.

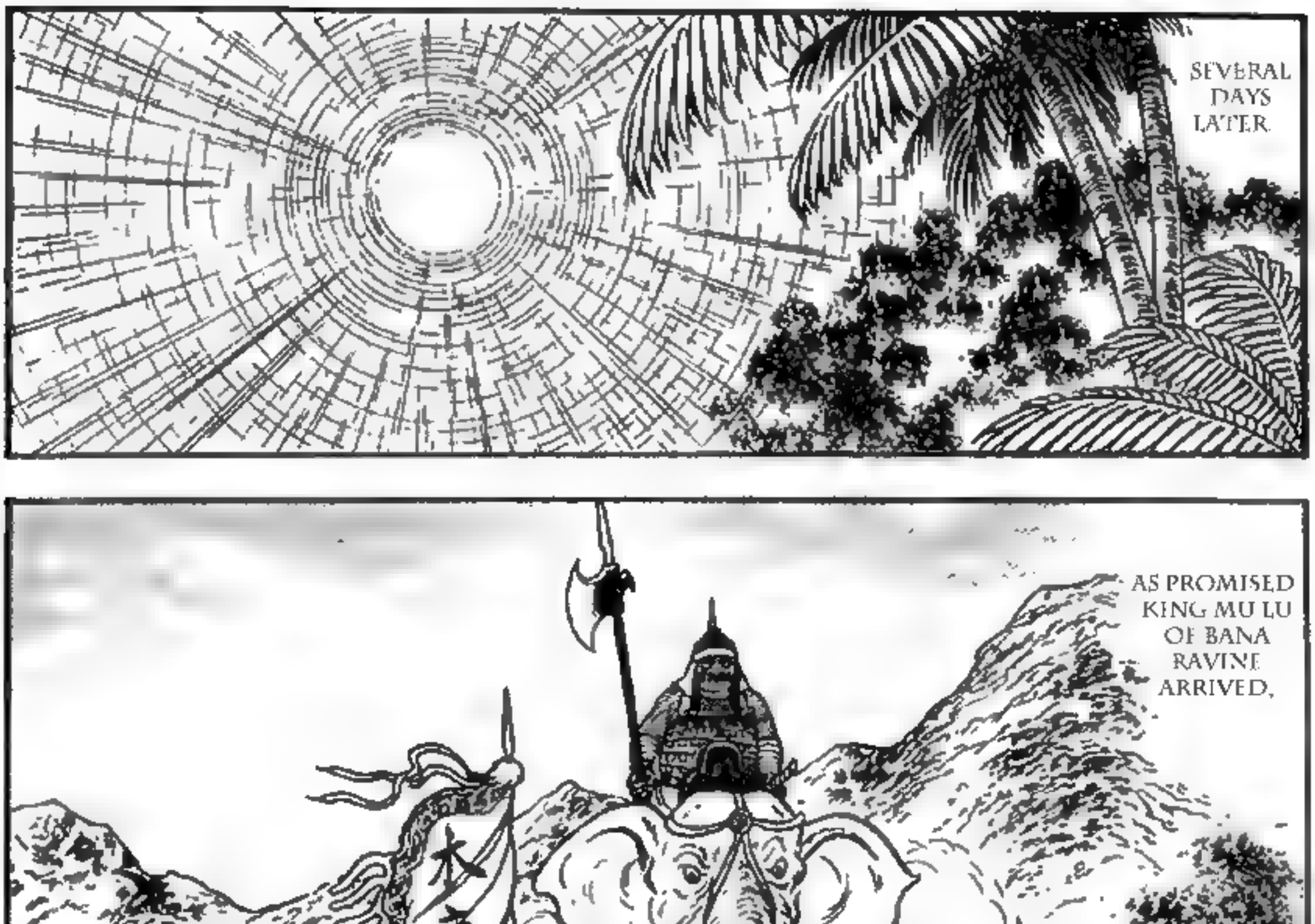
YES.

HE WILL!?

HE SAID HE WILL ARRIVE HERE WITH HIS ARMY IN A FEW DAYS TO HELP US.

YES.

THIS IS WONDERFUL NEWS! WE CAN NOW PUSH BACK THE SHU ARMY.


SEVERAL DAYS LATER.
AS PROMISED KING MU LU OF BANA RAVINE ARRIVED,
木鹿
WITH AN ARMY OF UNUSUAL TROOPS

THESE TROOPS INCLUDED A MIXED PACK OF OVER 1000 BEASTS.
AND THANK YOU FOR COMING ALL THE WAY OUT TO ESCORT ME AND MY TROOPS.
THANK YOU FOR COMING TO MY AID, KING MU LU.

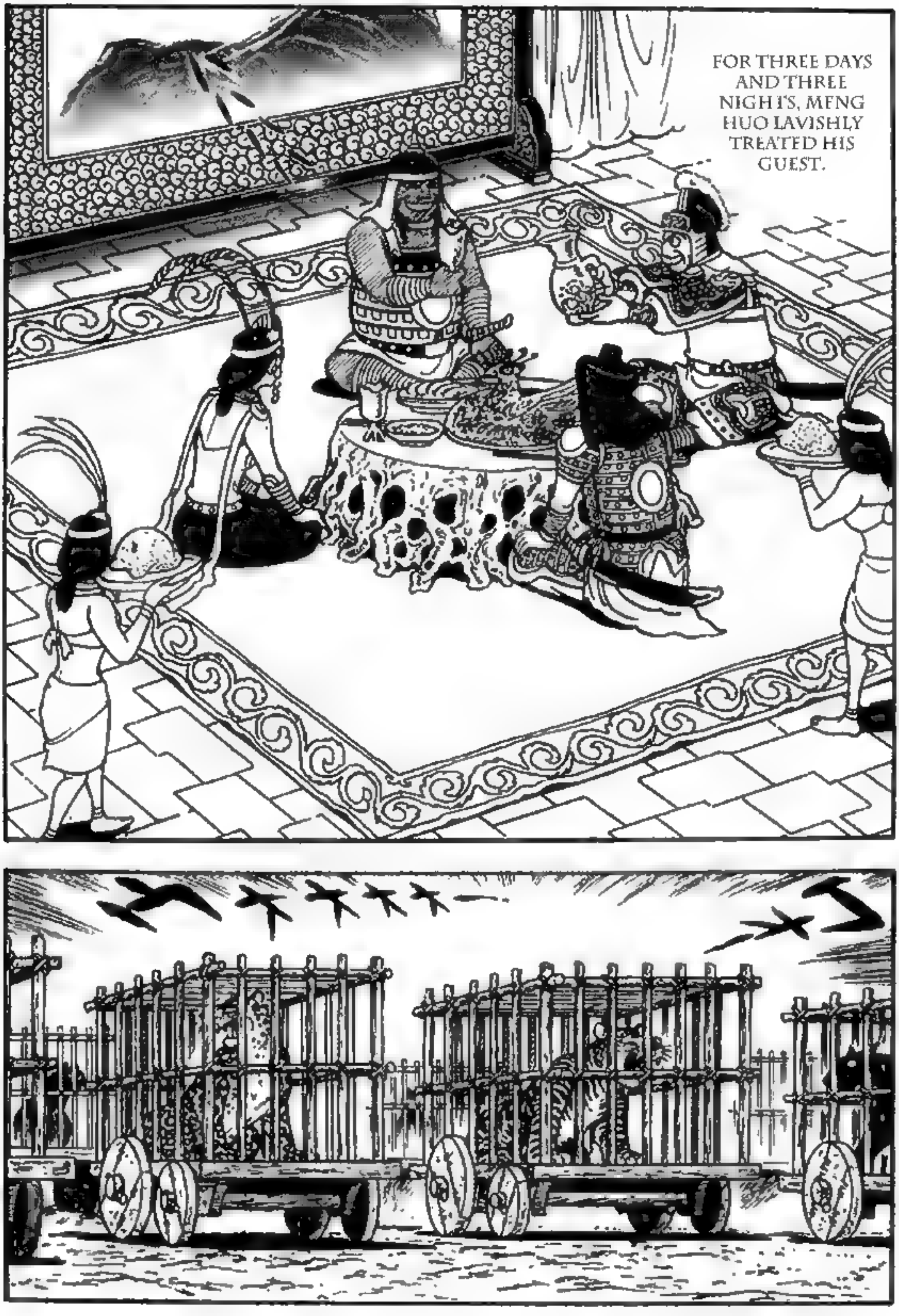
MUST BE QUITE THE FOE IF EVEN KING MENG HUO IS FORCED TO ASK FOR MY HELP, EH?

HMPH.

HAHA... THANK YOU FOR YOUR REASSURING WORDS.

BUT DON'T YOU WORRY, THEY WON'T GET AWAY WITH ANYTHING ON MY WATCH.

COME INTO MY PALACE. I HAVE PREPARED A GREAT FEAST.


FOR THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS, MENG HUO LAVISHLY TREATED HIS GUEST.

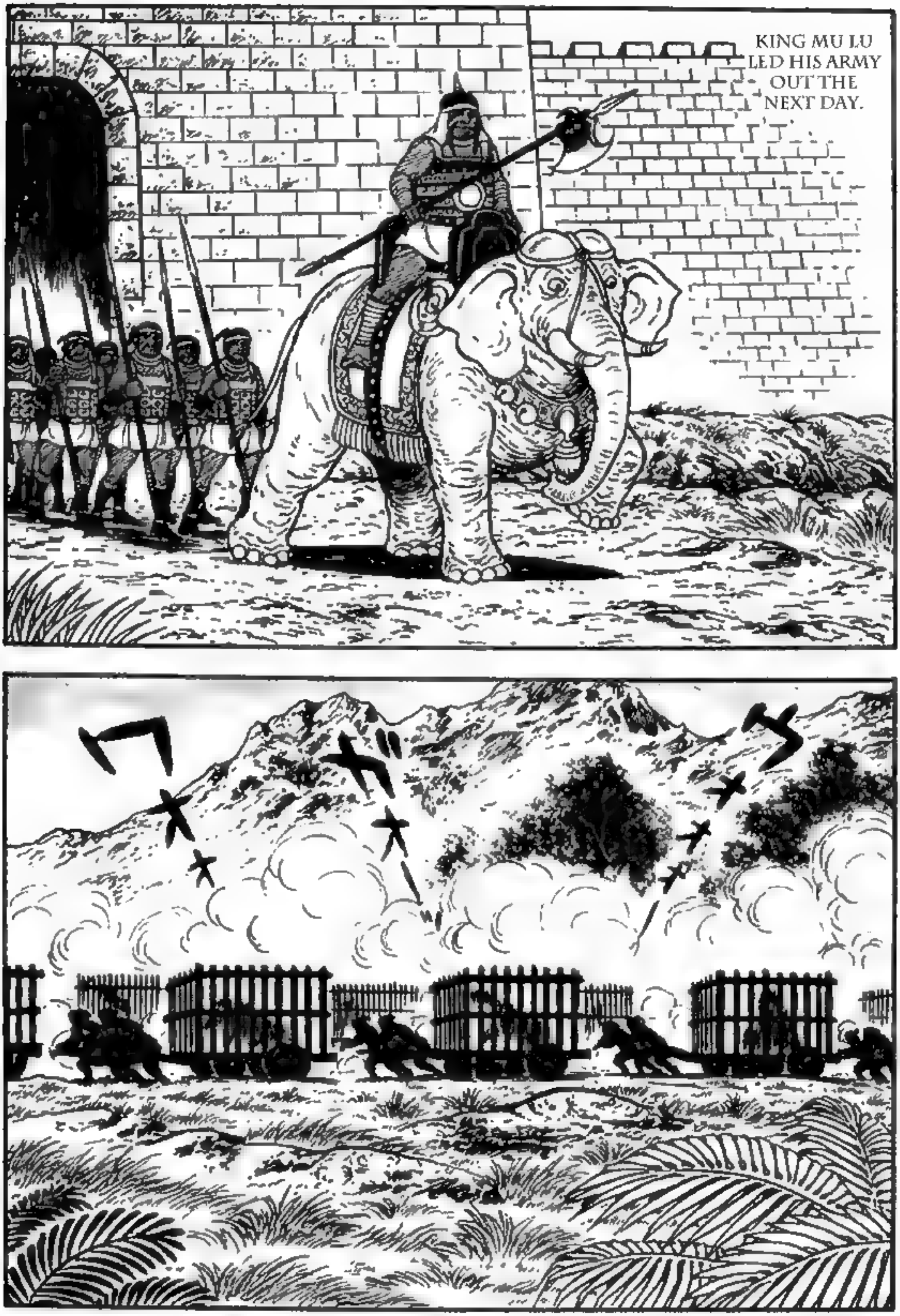
HAHA, THAT'S INTENDED. YOU'VE GOTTA STARVE THEM A BIT TO MAKE THEM VICIOUS IN BATTLE.

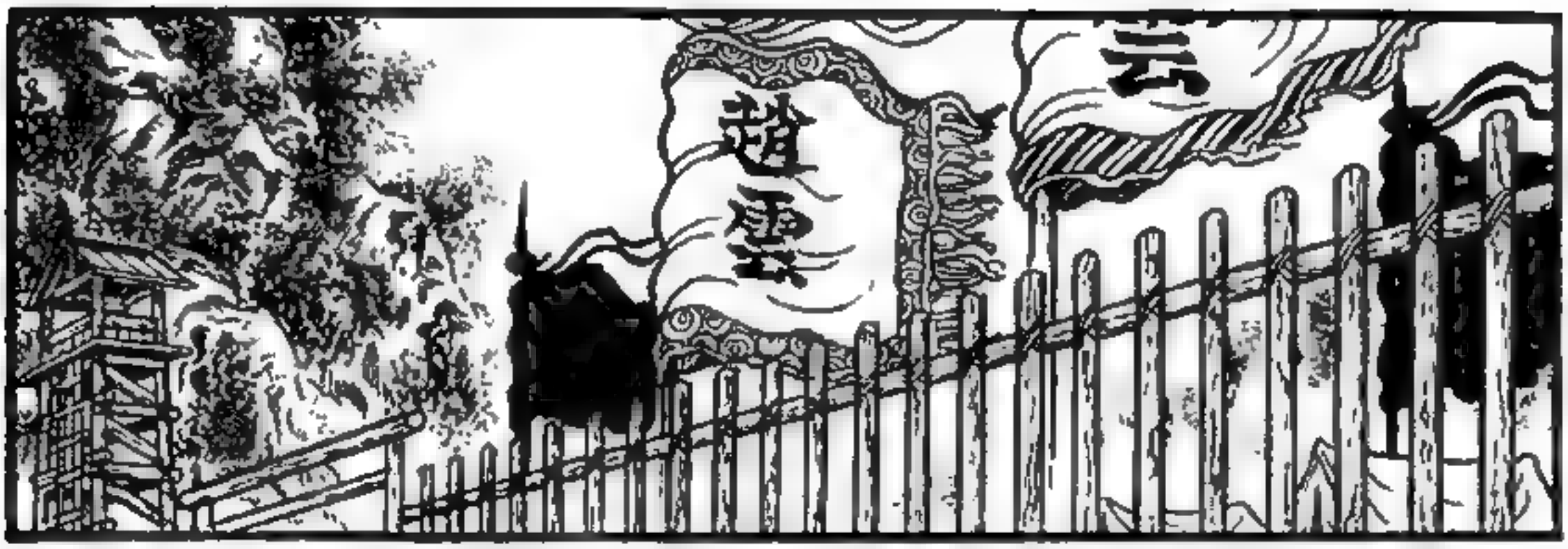
YOUR BEASTS SEEM QUITE AGITATED. IS SOMETHING WRONG?

SINCE THEY LOOK READY, I'LL LEAD MY BOYS OUT TO ATTACK THE SHU ARMY TOMORROW.

O-OF COURSE, OF COURSE!

OF COURSE, YOU ***WILL*** COMPENSATE ME WELL IF I WERE TO DEFEAT THE ENEMIES FOR YOU, RIGHT...?

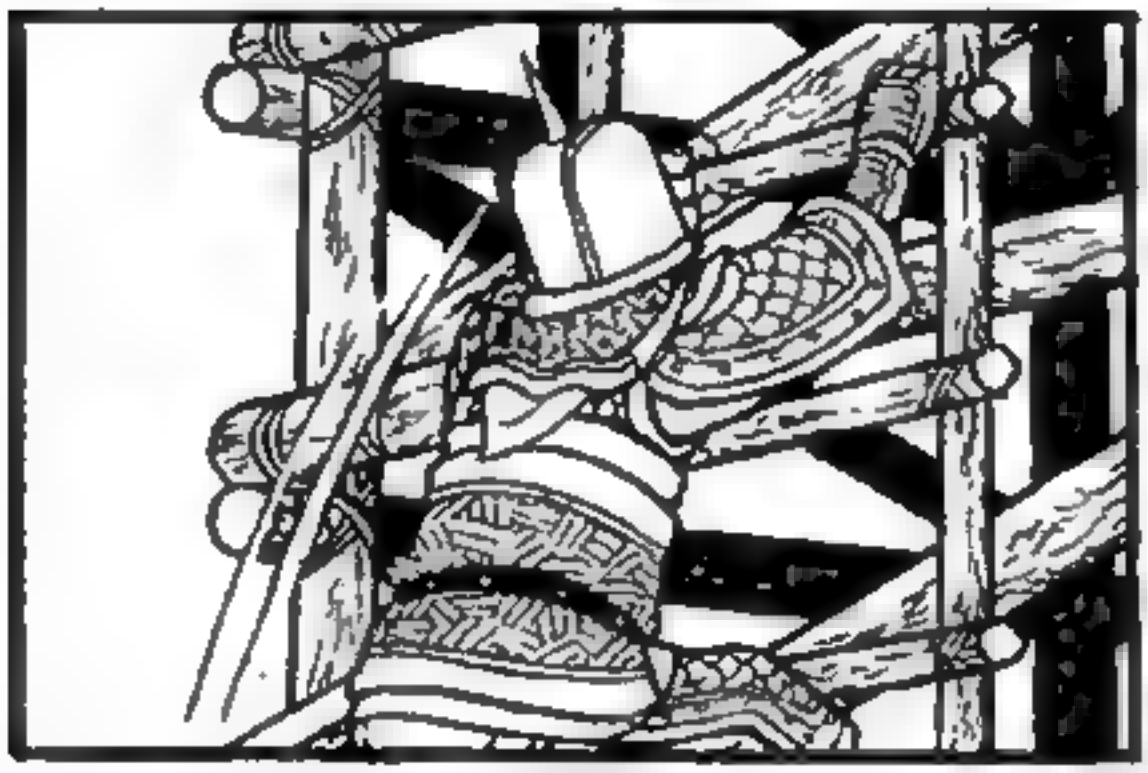

KING MU LU
LED HIS ARMY
OUT THE
NEXT DAY.


趙雲

GENERAL! THERE'S A VERY ODD ARMY APPROACHING OUR CAMPS!

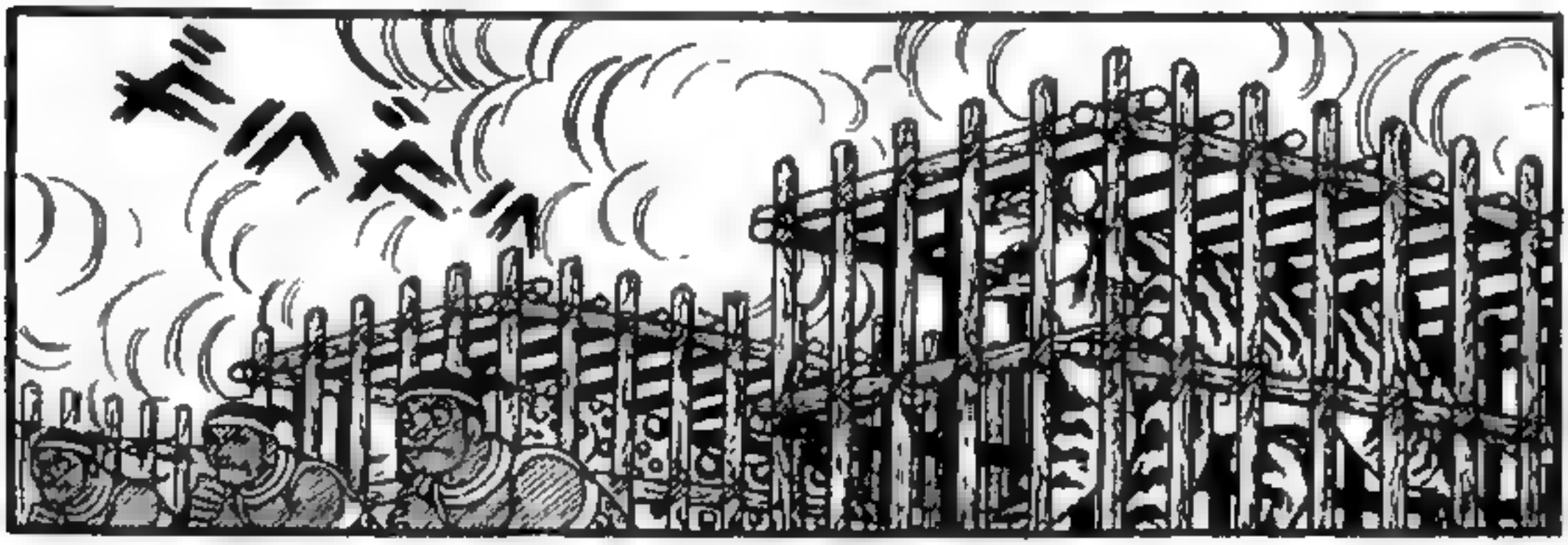
HM?

ODD...?

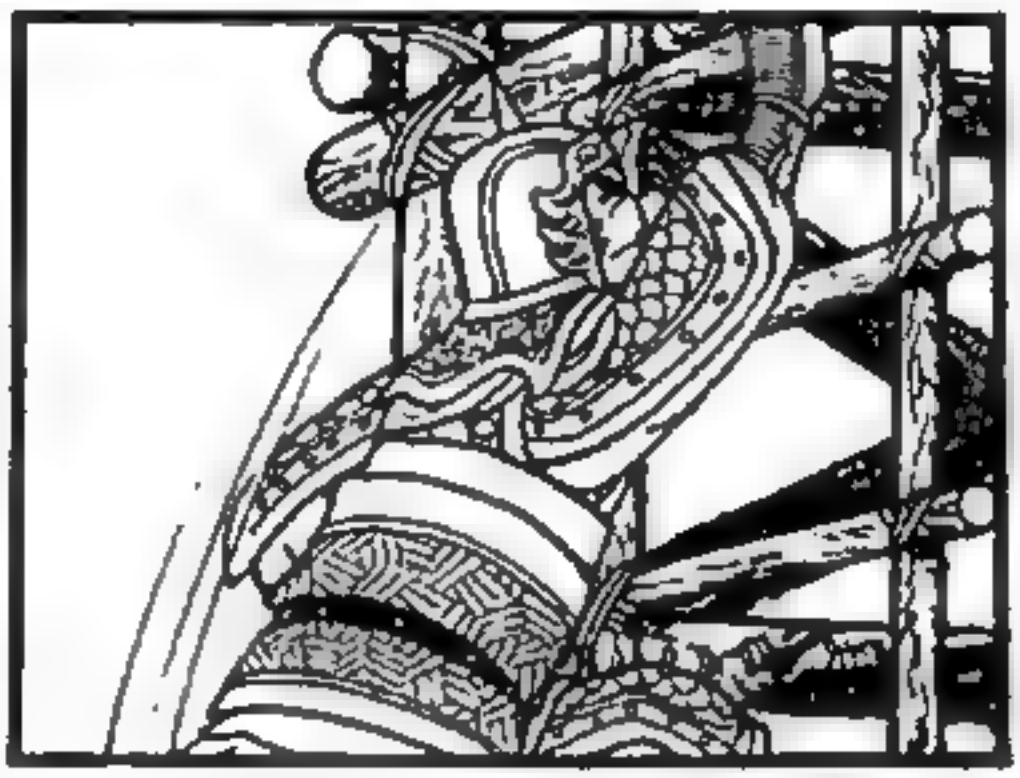


SEE FOR YOURSELF, SIR!

HM!?



WEI YAN!



SAME HERE.

IN ALL MY YEARS OF BATTLE, I'VE NEVER SEEN AN ARMY LIKE THAT.

YEAH, JUST NOW.

DID YOU SEE?

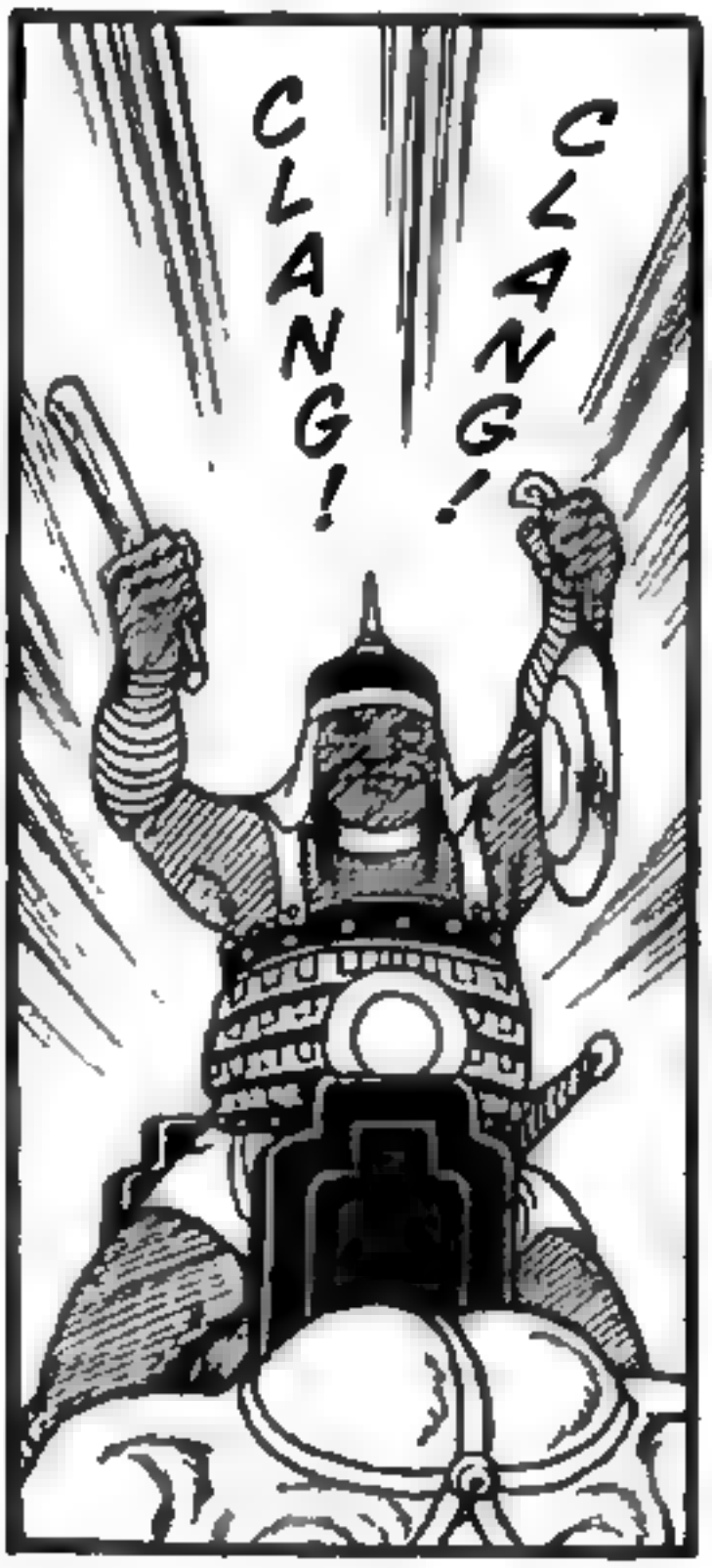
SOUND THE SIGNAL TO MARCH OUT!

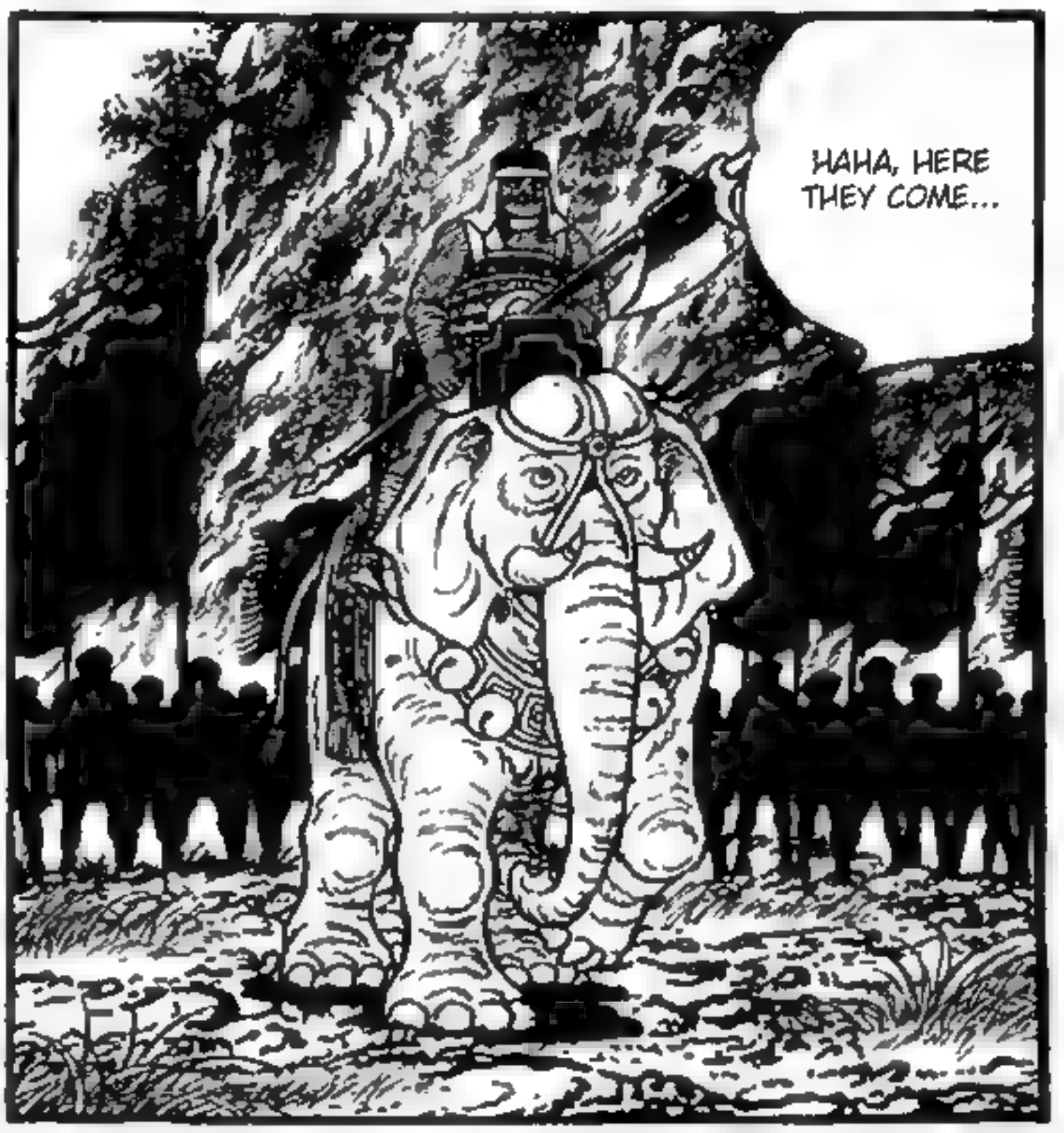
YOU'RE RIGHT.

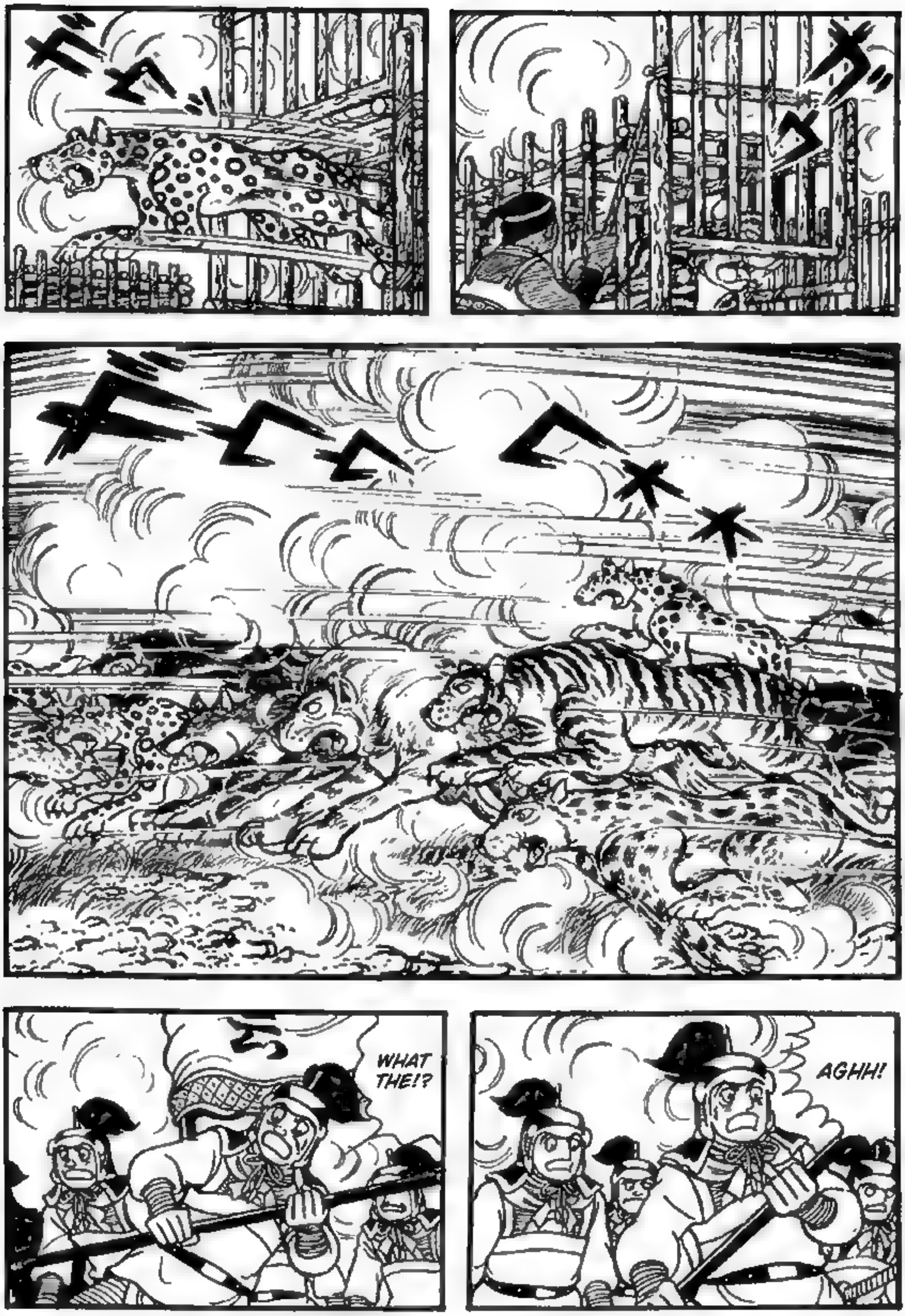
WELL, WE CAN'T JUST TWIDDLE OUR THUMBS HERE IF THE ENEMY IS COMING TO ATTACK US.

YES, SIR.

趙雲
趙雲


CLANG!
CLANG!


HAHA, HERE THEY COME...


WHAT THE!?
AGHH!

HELP!

GAHH!

AHHH!

AHH!

RAHH!

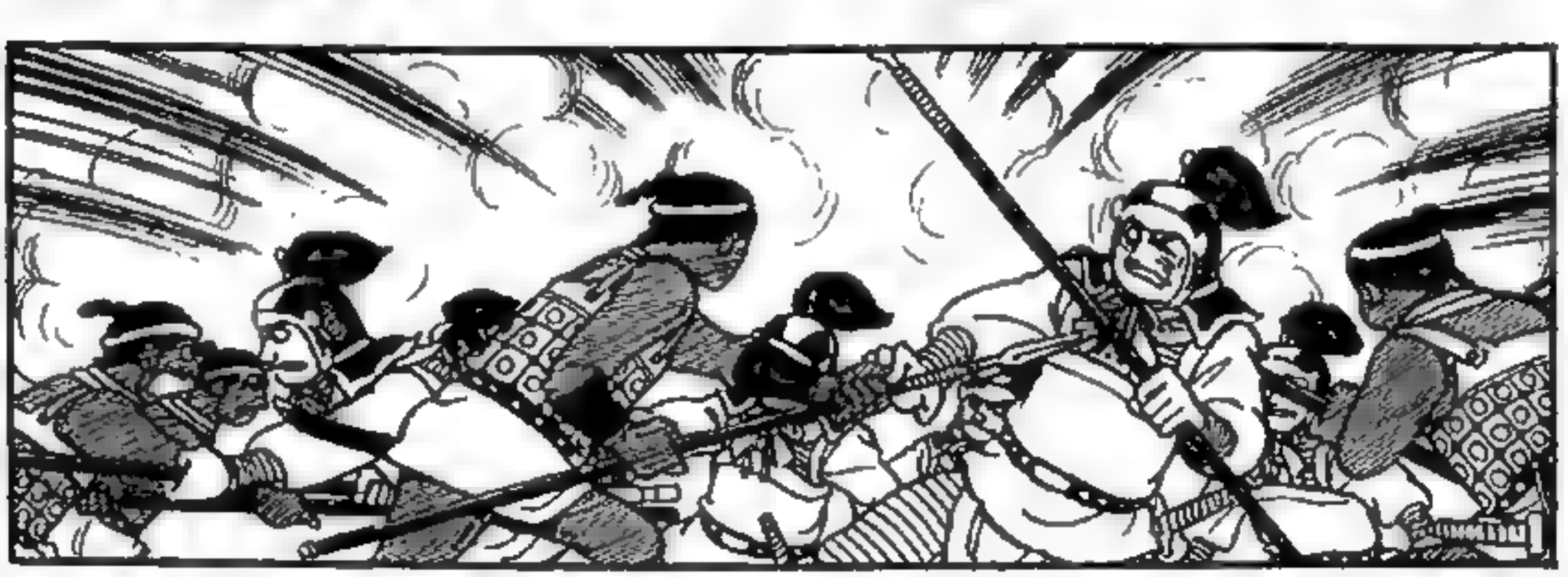
NOO!

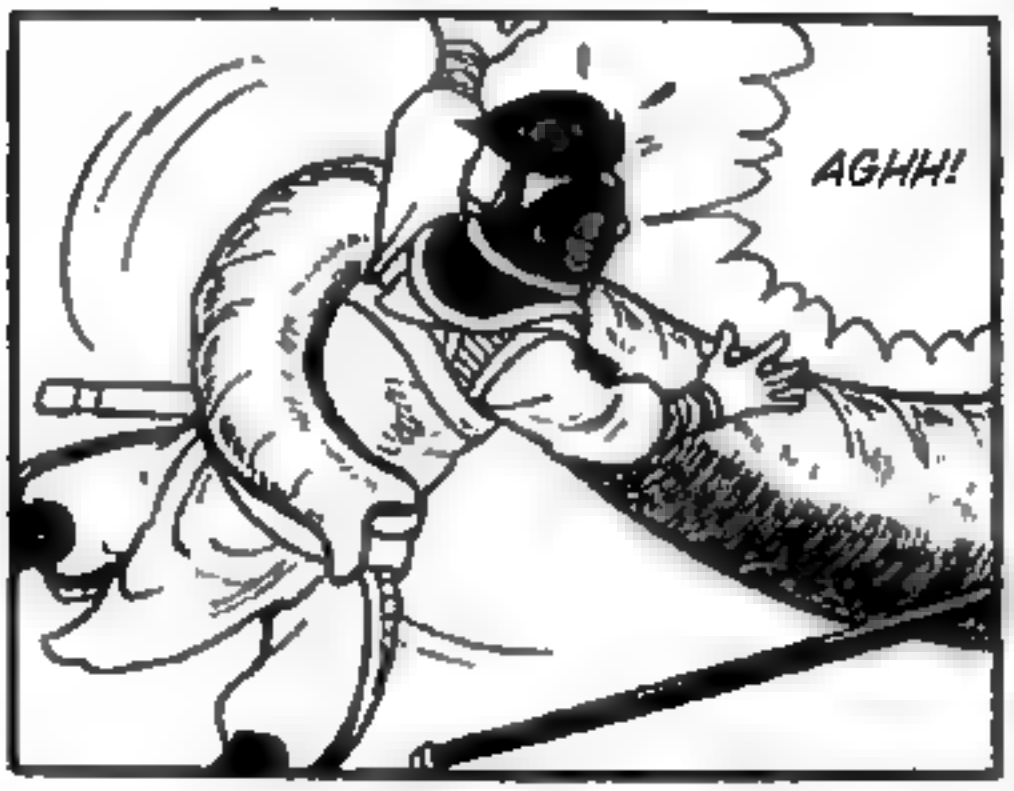
RETREAT!
RETREAT!

CURSES,
THE MEN
ARE COM-
PLETELY
SPOOKED!

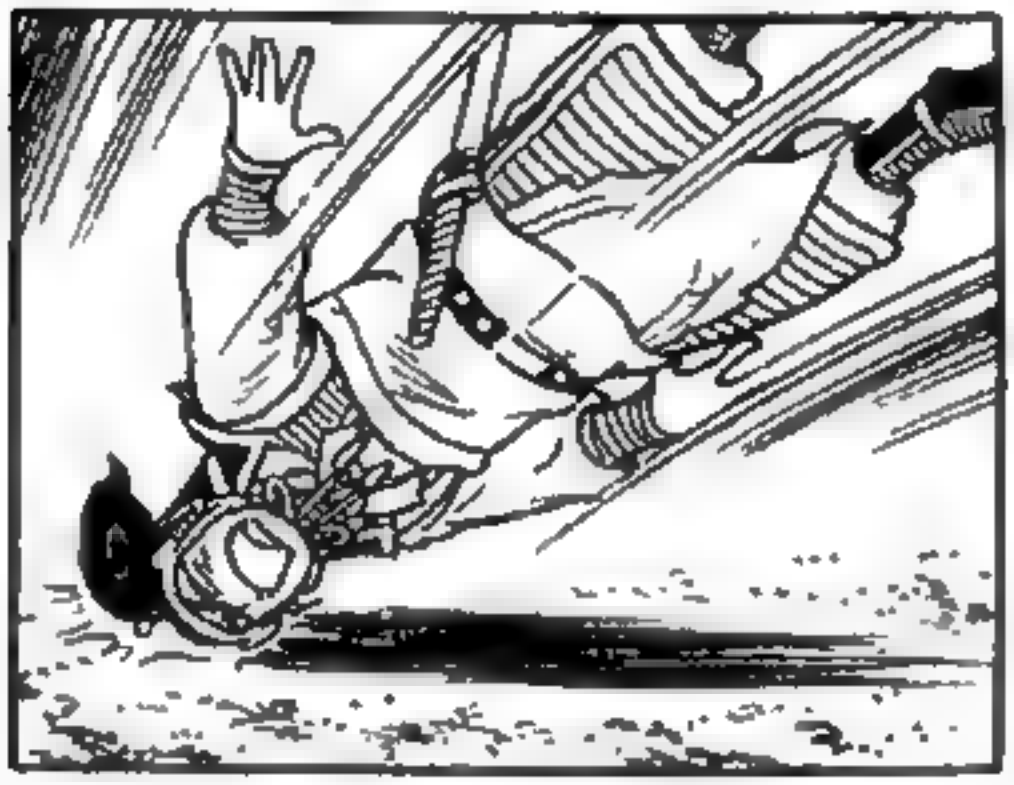
趙雲
小蜀

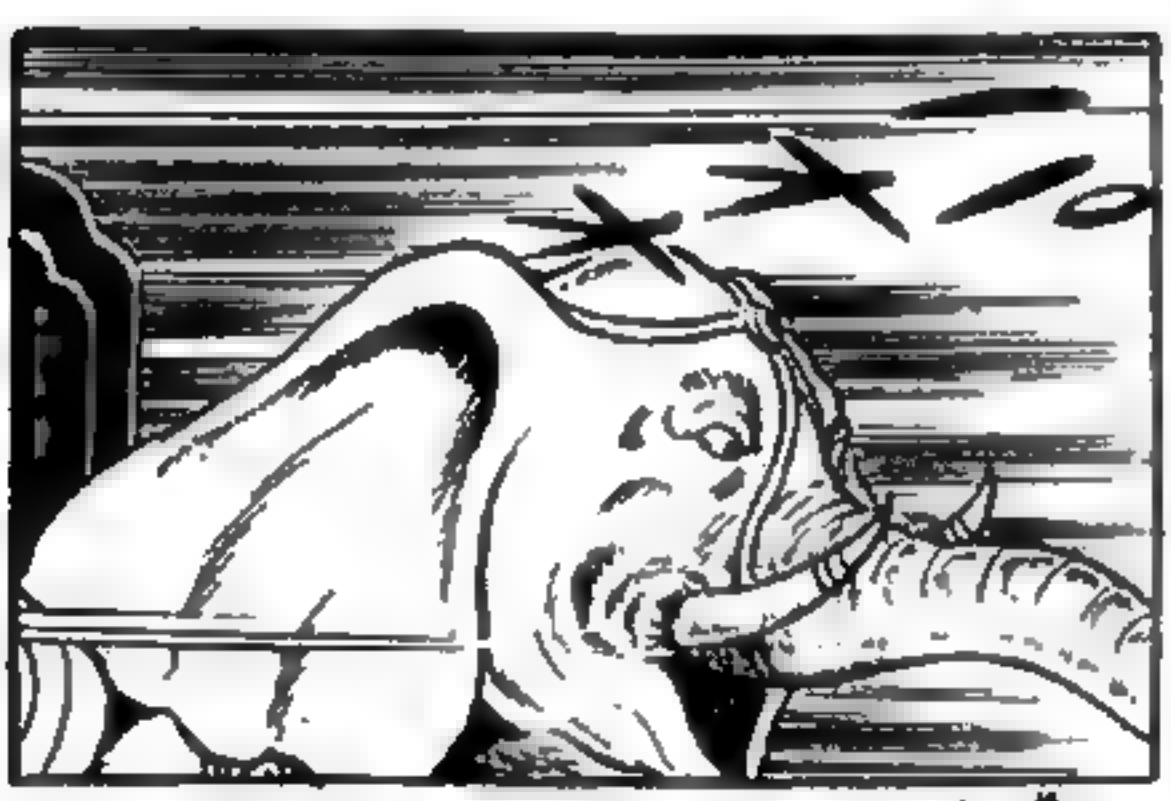
LOOK! THE ENEMIES ARE FLEEING IN PANIC BEFORE OUR MIGHT! CHASE THEM DOWN!

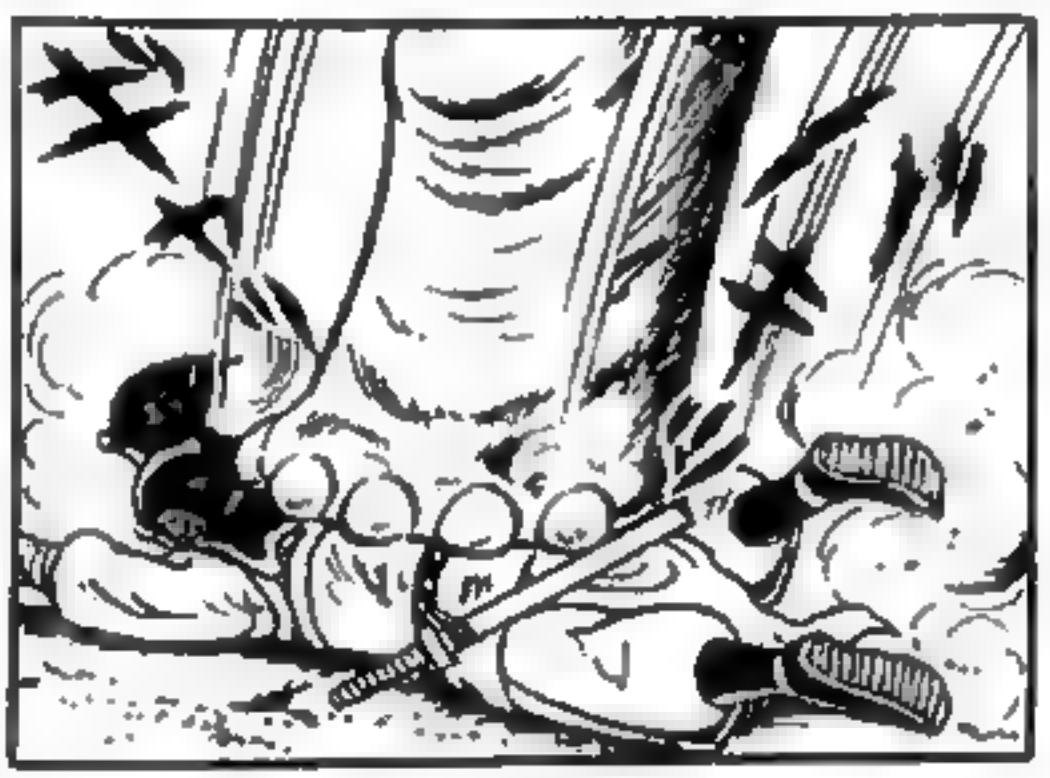


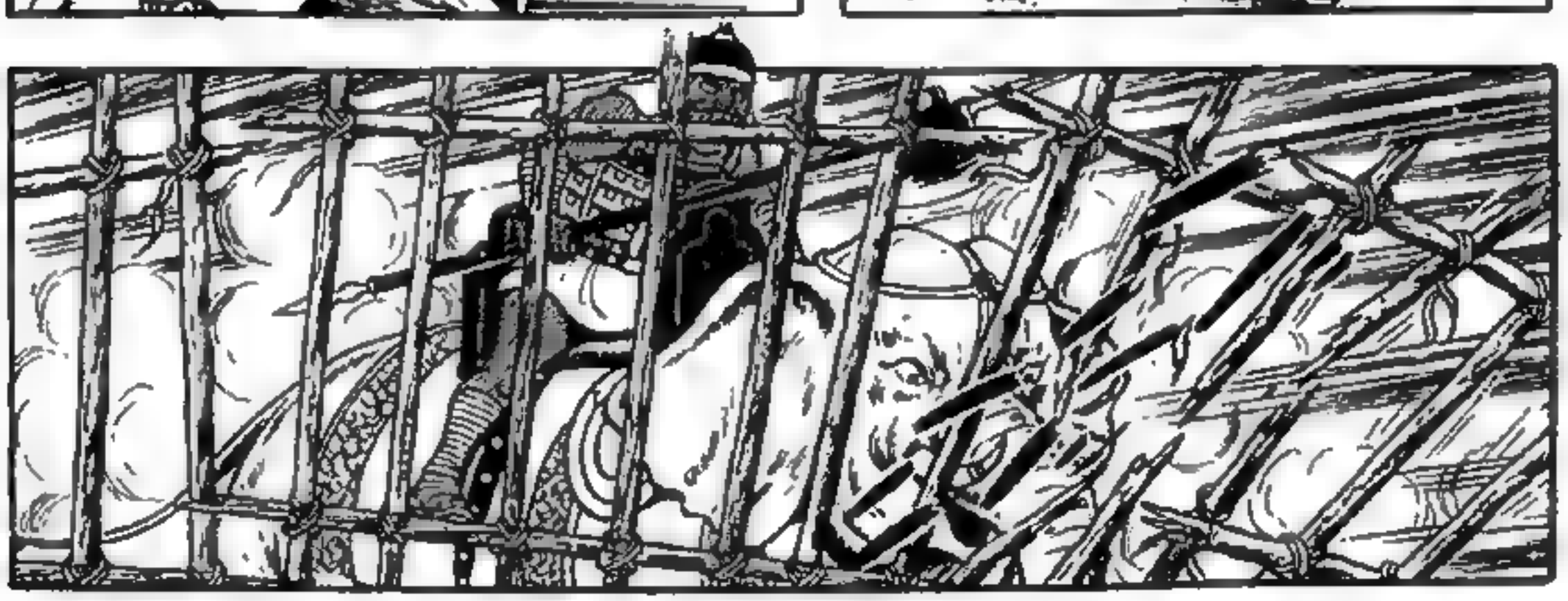

AGHH!

KILL EVERY LAST ONE OF'EM!

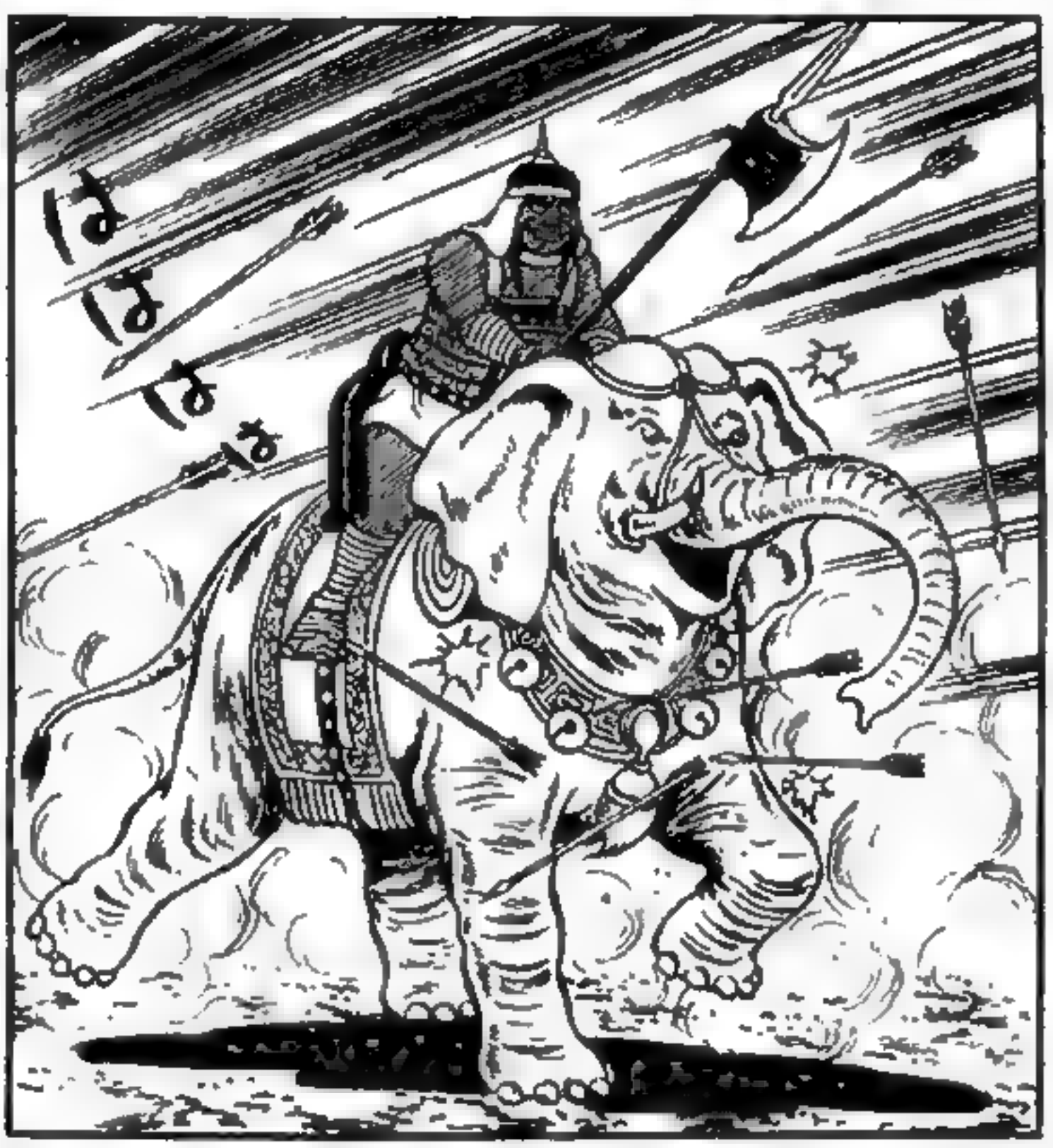


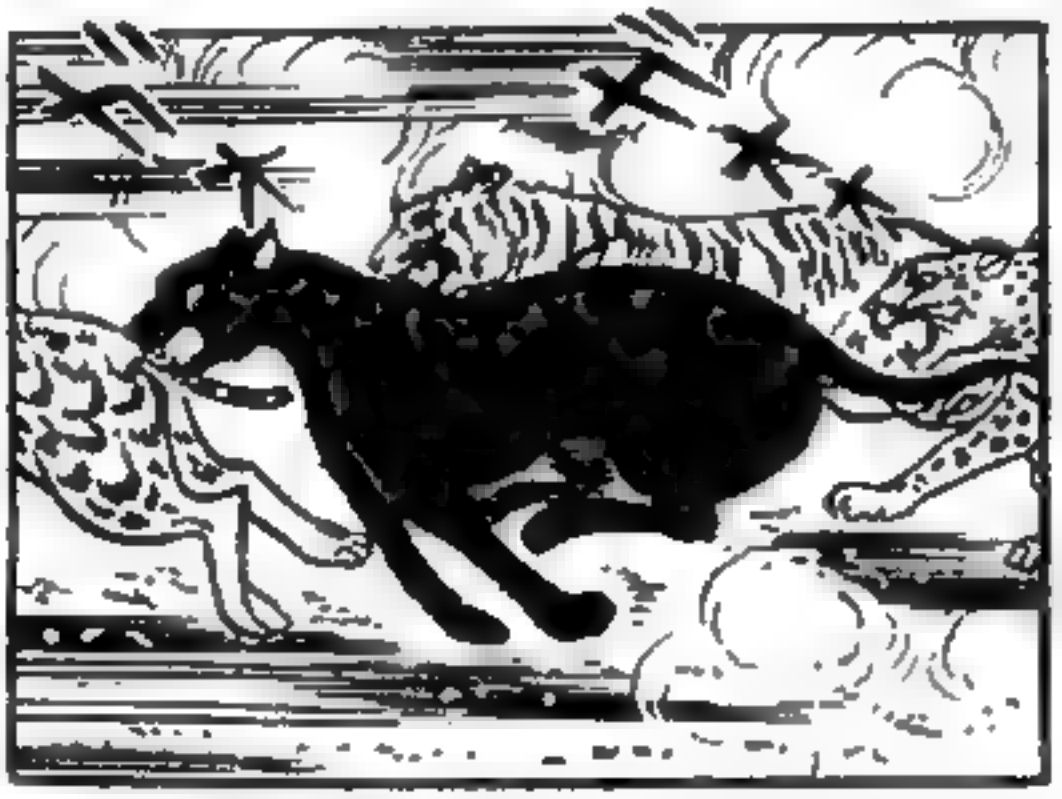


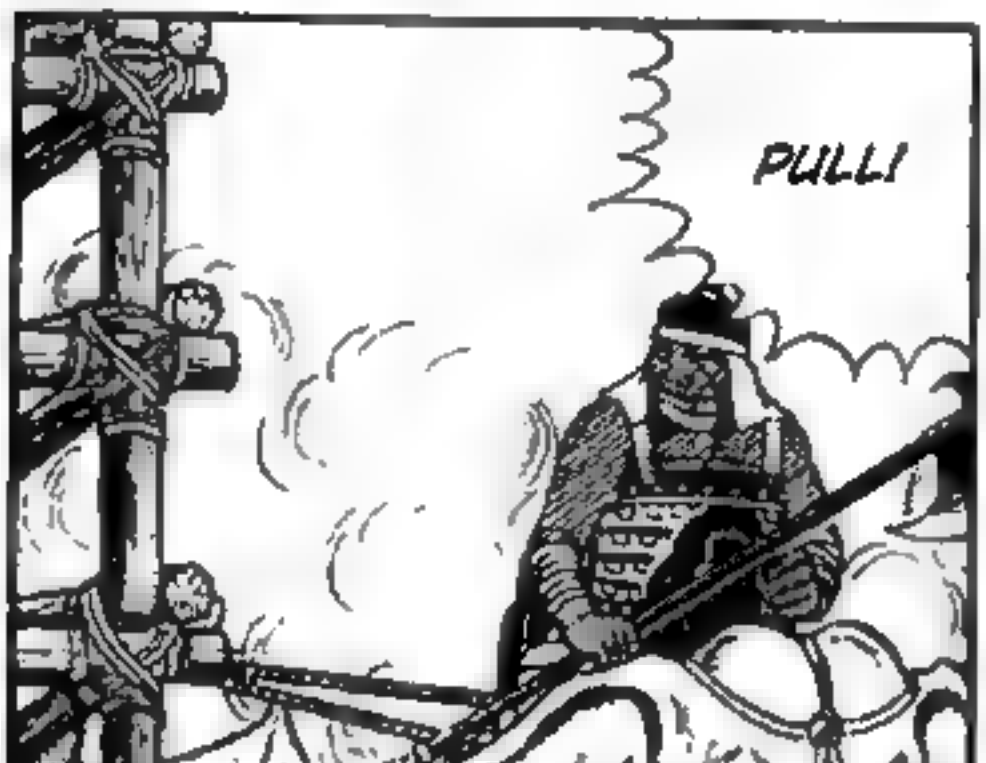


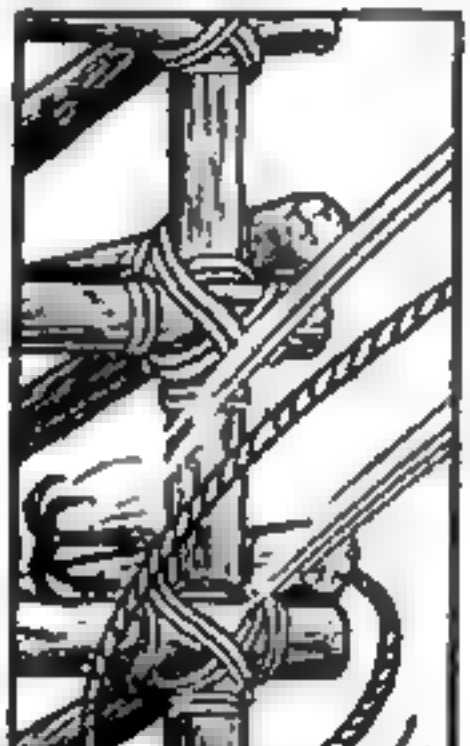


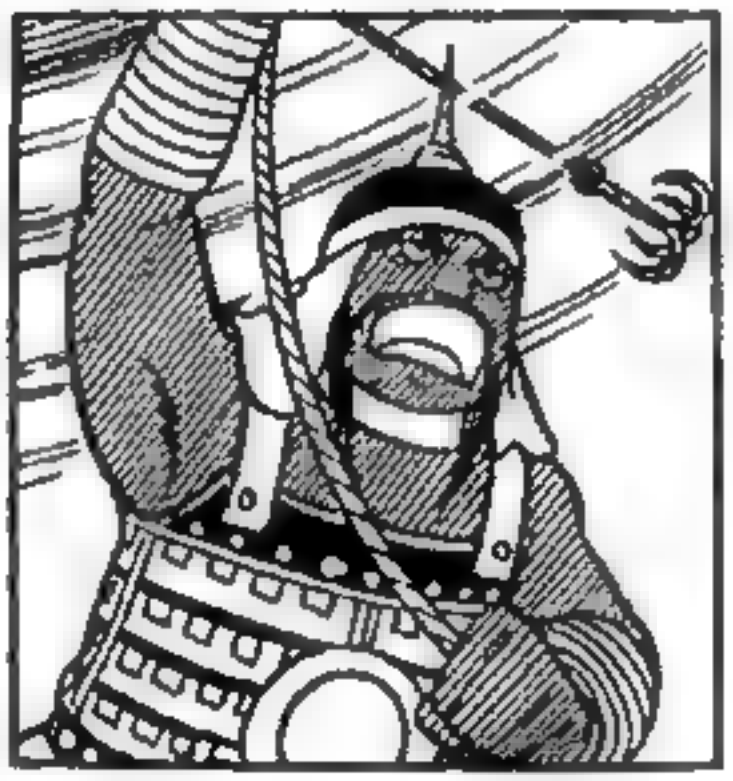
KEEP UP THE ATTACK!

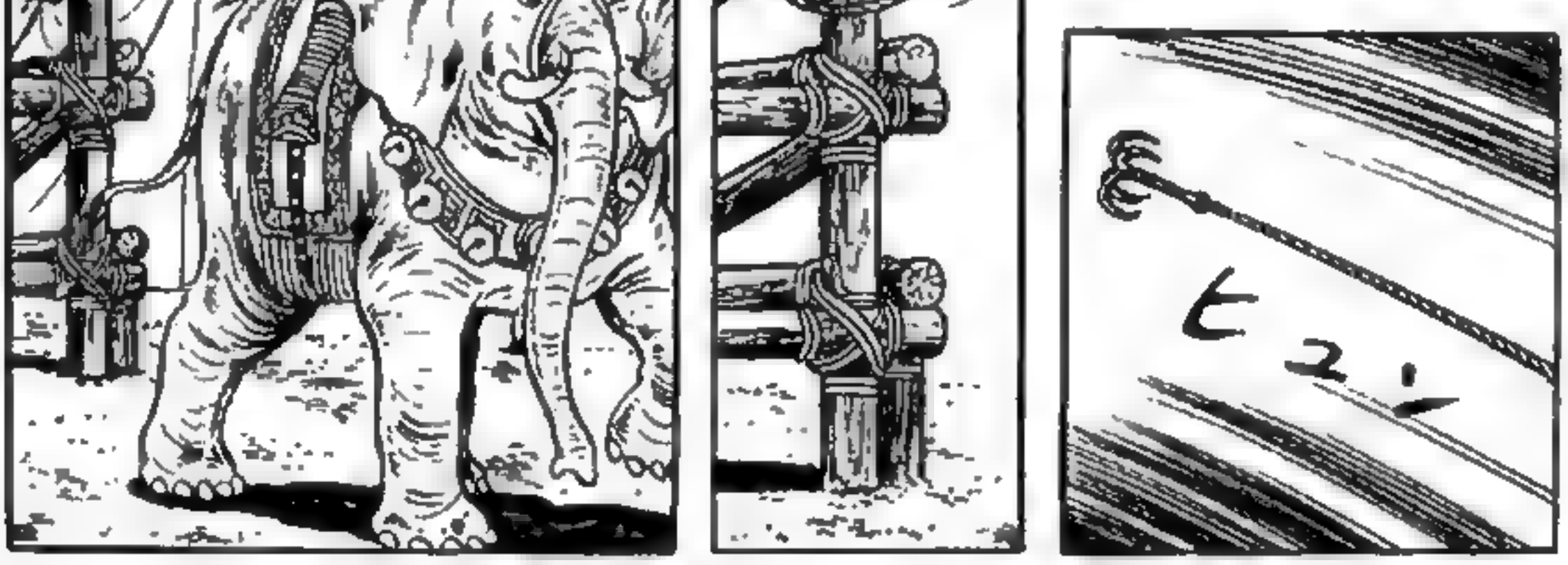





PULLI



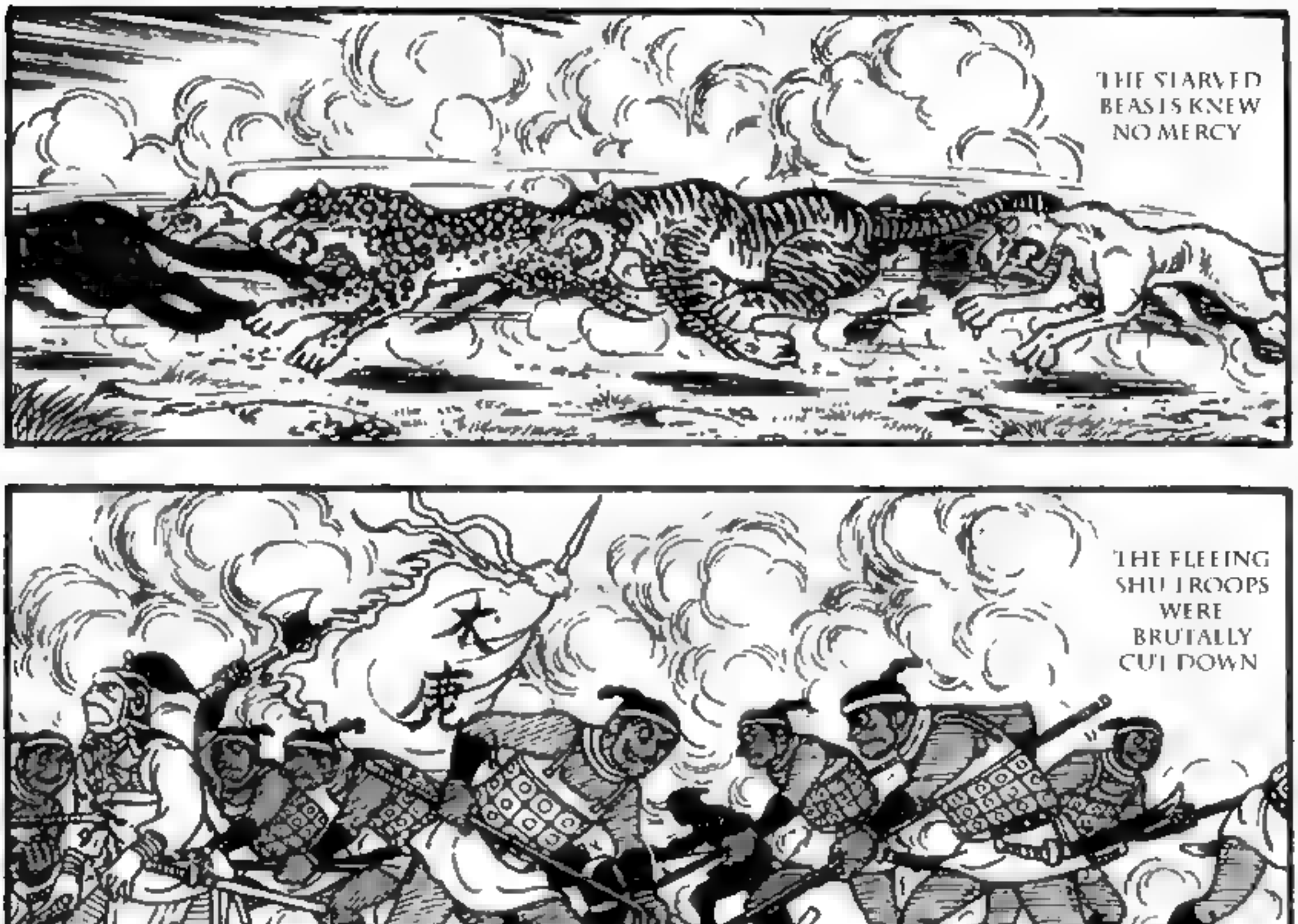




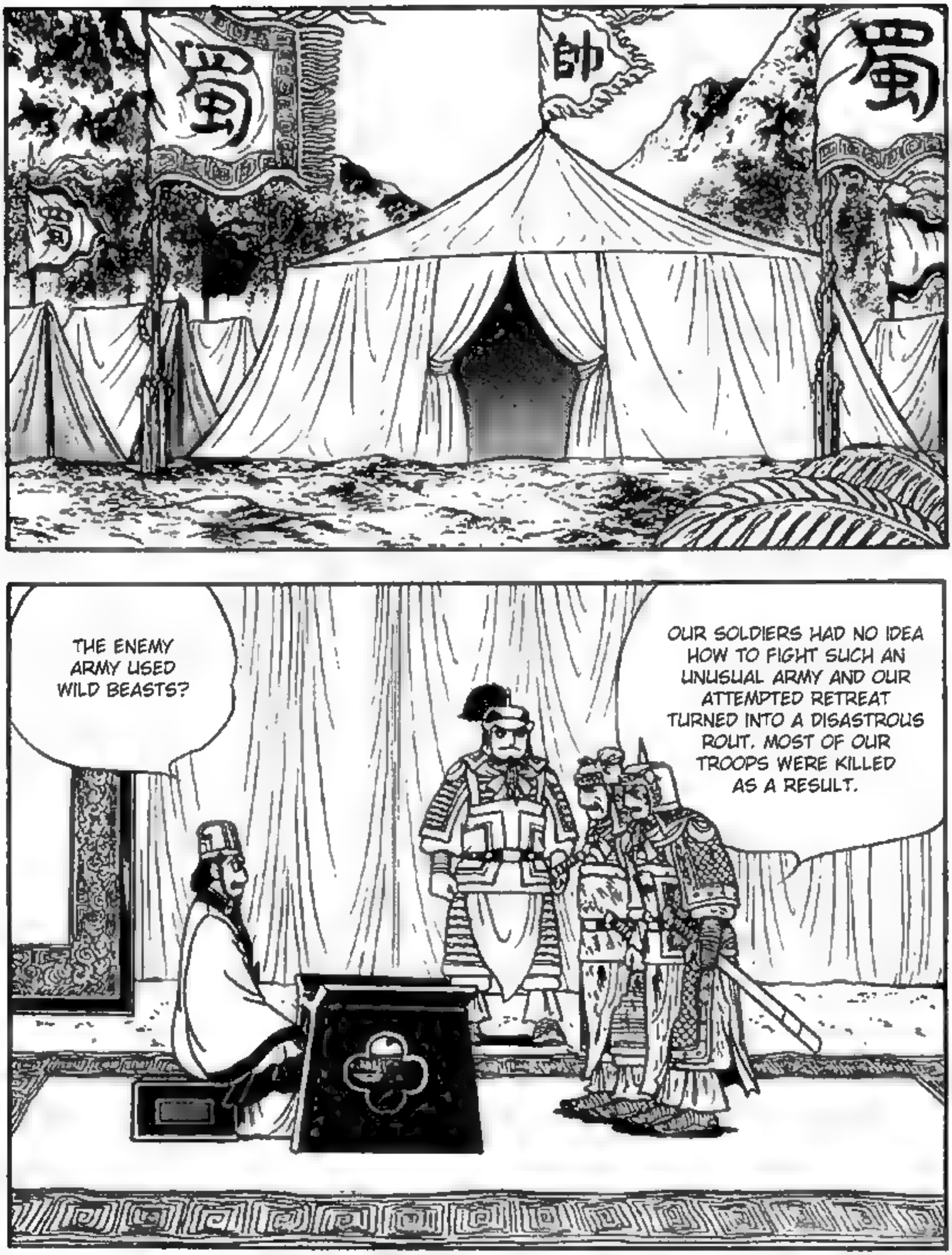
OUR CAMP CAN'T HOLD THEM OFF!

ABANDON CAMP AND RETREAT!

退
四
面
楚
歌


THE STARVED BEASTS KNEW NO MERCY
THE FLEEING SHU TROOPS WERE BRUTALLY CUT DOWN
IT WAS A DEVASTAT-ING DEFEAT FOR ZHAO ZILONG AND WEI YAN'S ARMY

WOODEN BEASTS


THE ENEMY ARMY USED WILD BEASTS?
OUR SOLDIERS HAD NO IDEA HOW TO FIGHT SUCH AN UNUSUAL ARMY AND OUR ATTEMPTED RETREAT TURNED INTO A DISASTROUS ROUT. MOST OF OUR TROOPS WERE KILLED AS A RESULT.

PARDON?

SO THE BOOK WAS NOT LYING...

REST ASSURED, I DID PLAN FOR THIS CASE, REGARDLESS OF HOW UNLIKELY I CONSIDERED IT.

BACK WHEN I LIVED AS A HERMIT, ONE OF THE BOOKS I READ ABOUT THE NANMAN TRIBES MENTIONED THE USE OF WILD BEASTS IN THEIR ARMIES. I HAD TROUBLE BELIEVING IT AT THE TIME, BUT I GUESS NOT ANYMORE.

?

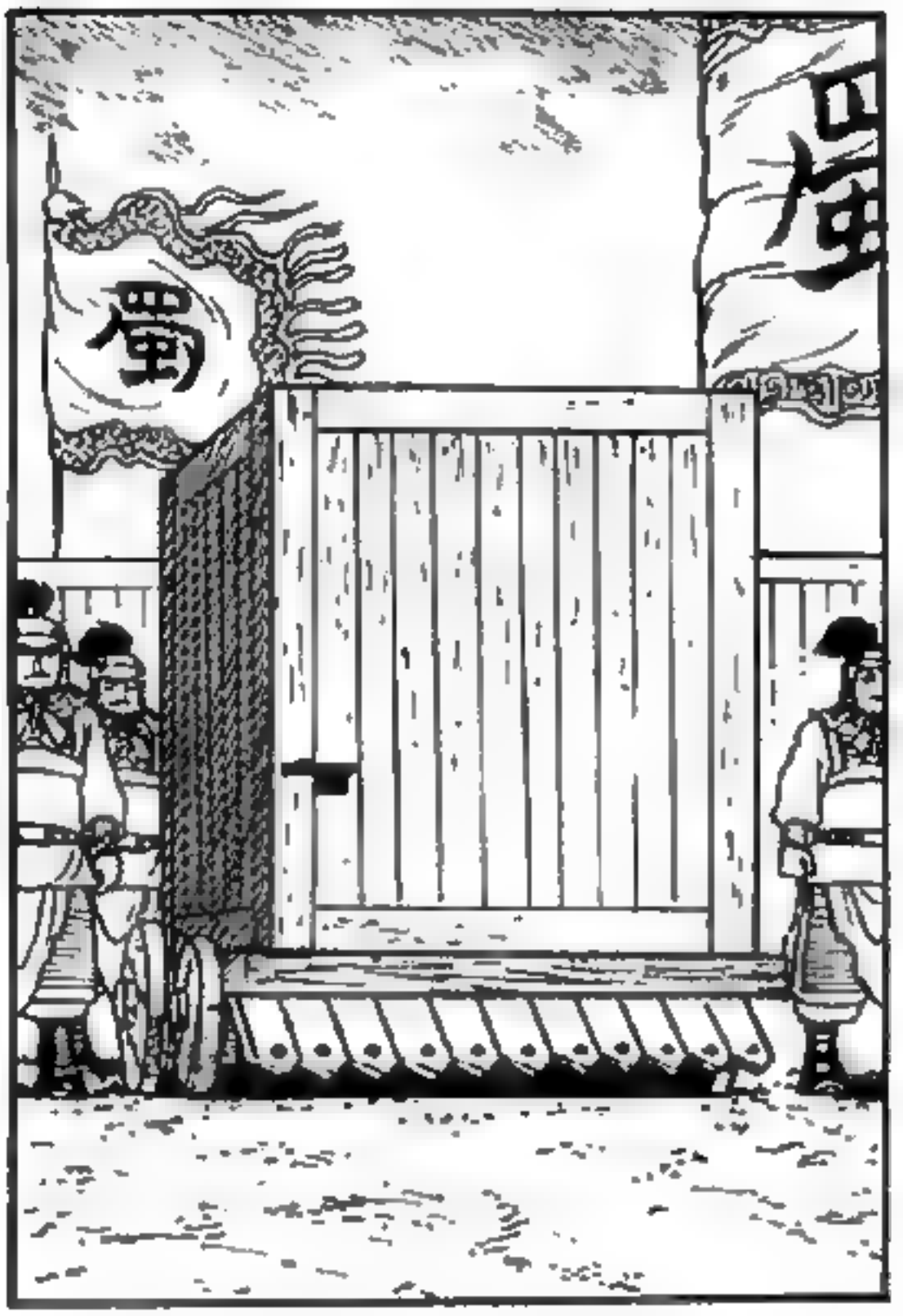
?

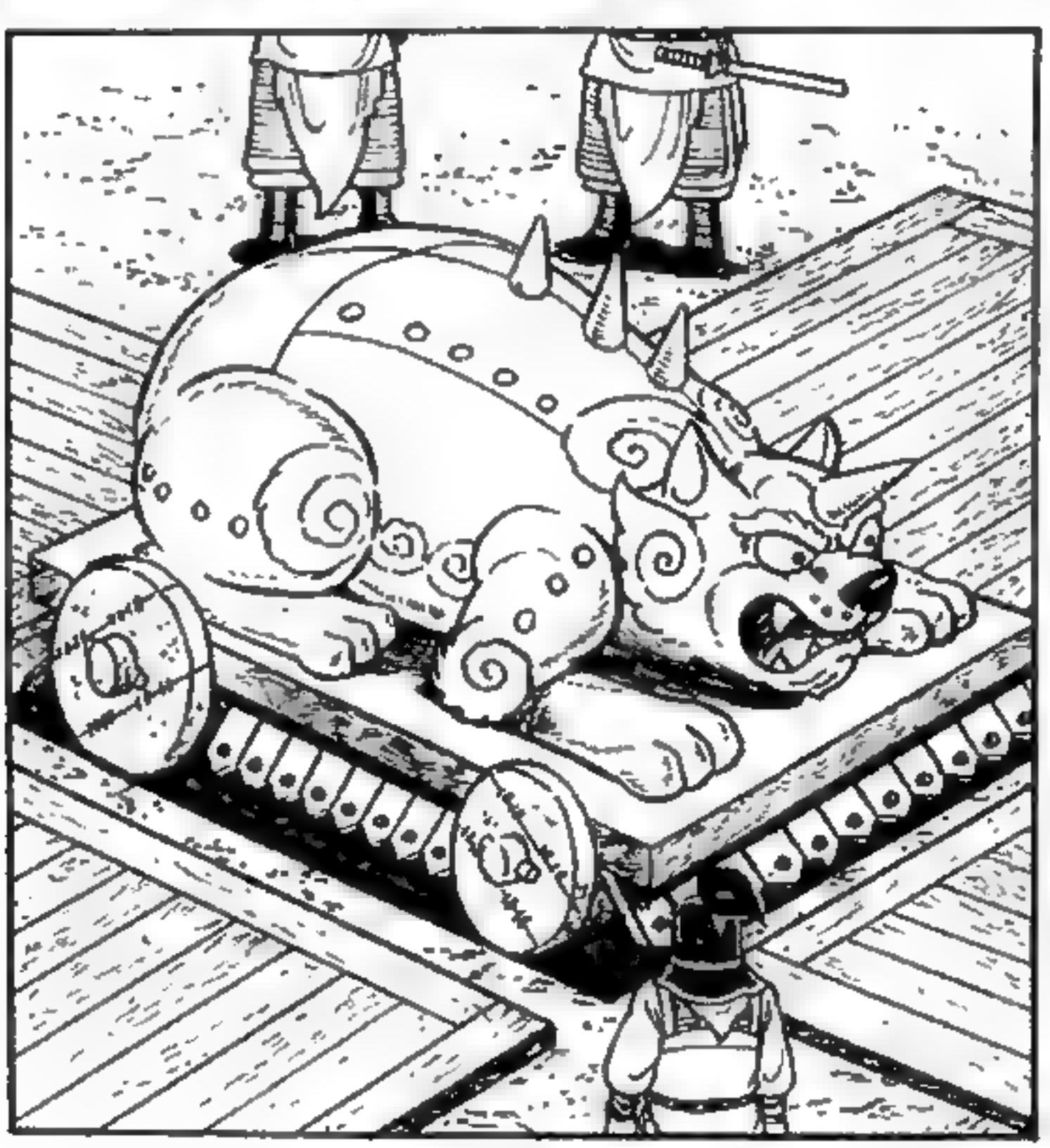
YES, SIR.

GO OPEN THE LARGE BOXES WE'VE BEEN HAULING.

THE CHANCEL-
LOR HAS
ORDERED TO
OPEN THESE
BOXES!

GO AHEAD. UNLOCK THEM.


蜀



THEY CAN BE MOVED FROM SOLDIERS PUSHING INSIDE.

WHAT IS THIS!?

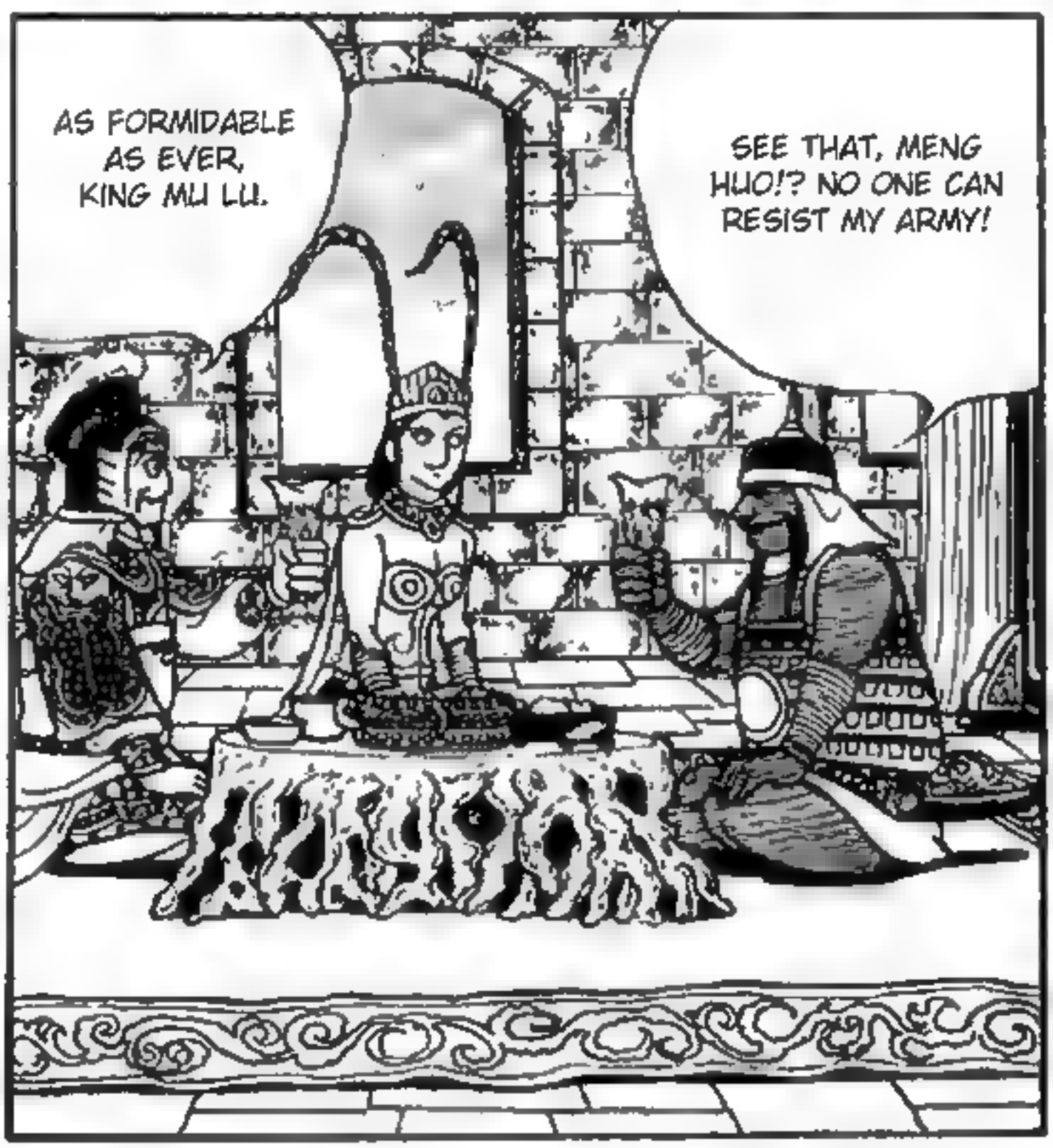
AHH!

I'VE SPECIALLY DESIGNED THESE WOODEN BEASTS SO THEY CAN MOVE AND SPEW FLAMES BY STUFFING THEIR MOUTHS FULL OF FLAMMABLES.

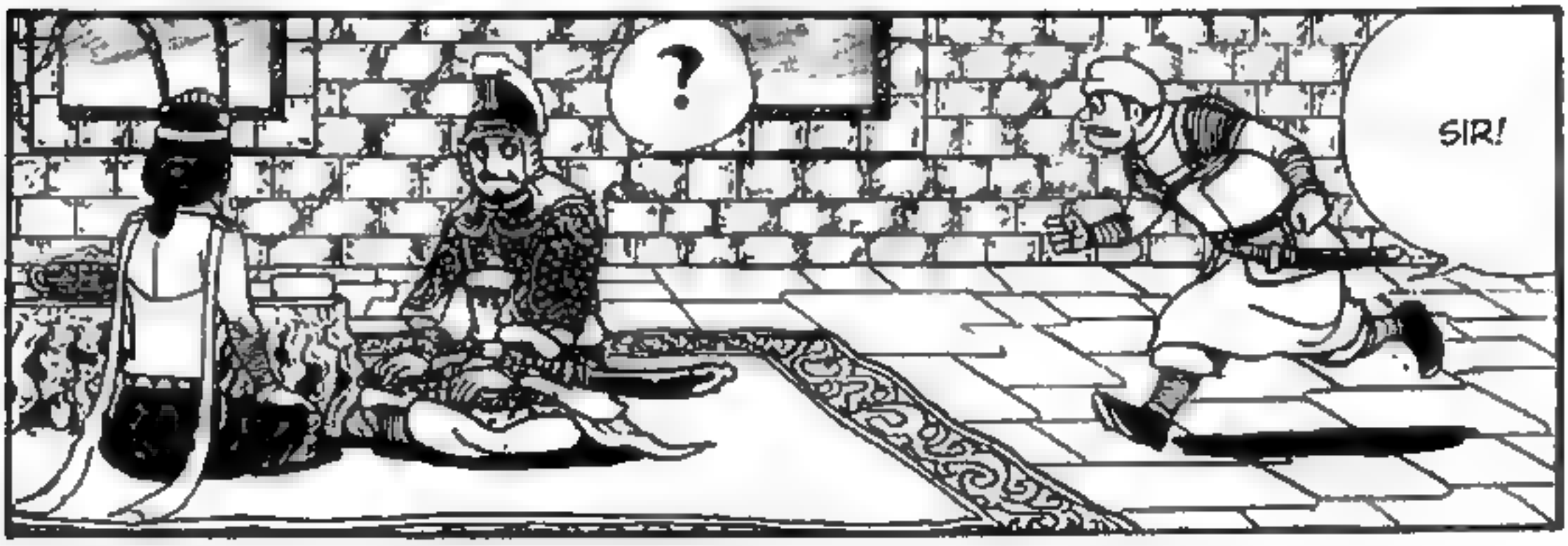
YES, SIR.

HAVE THESE WOODEN BEASTS LEAD THE ATTACK TOMORROW.

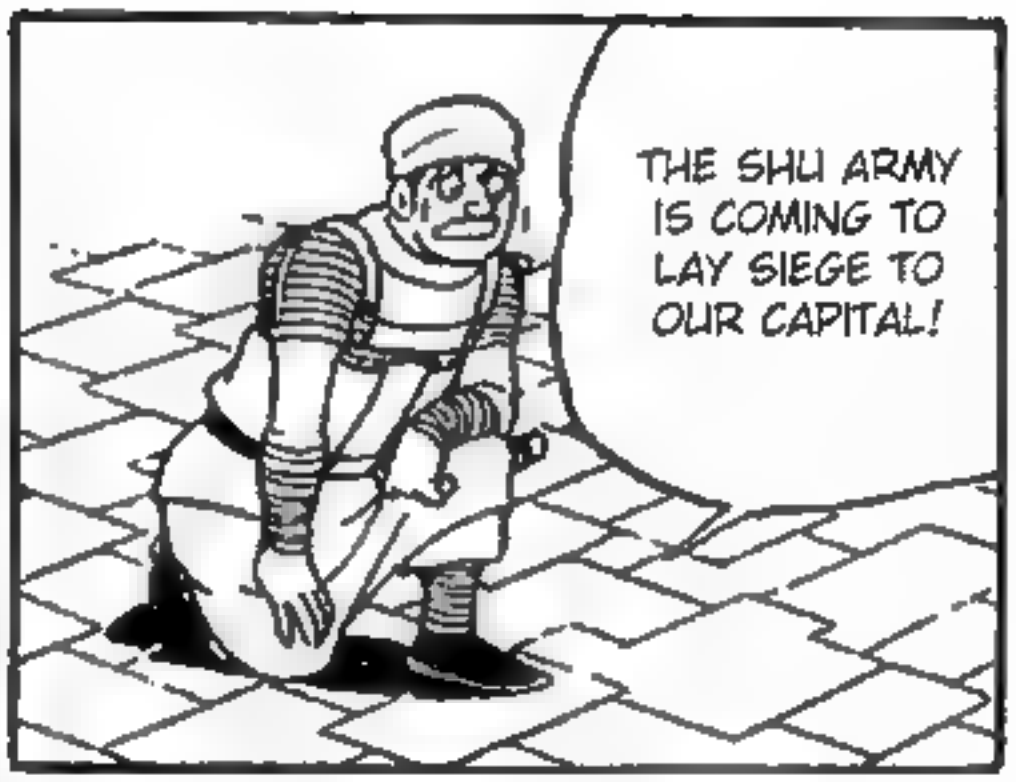
WITH ALL THE LOSSES INCURRED YESTERDAY, THEY'LL BE THINKING OF RETREATING.

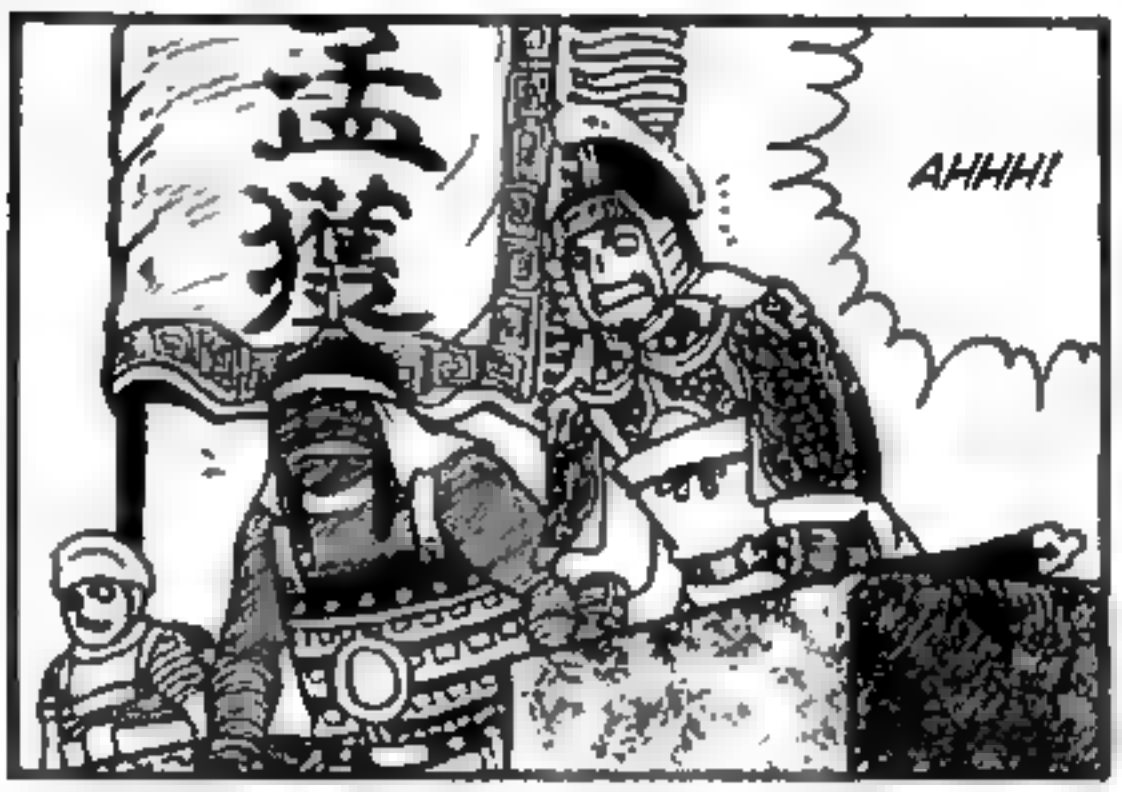

AS FORMIDABLE AS EVER, KING MU LU.
SEE THAT, MENG HUO!? NO ONE CAN RESIST MY ARMY!

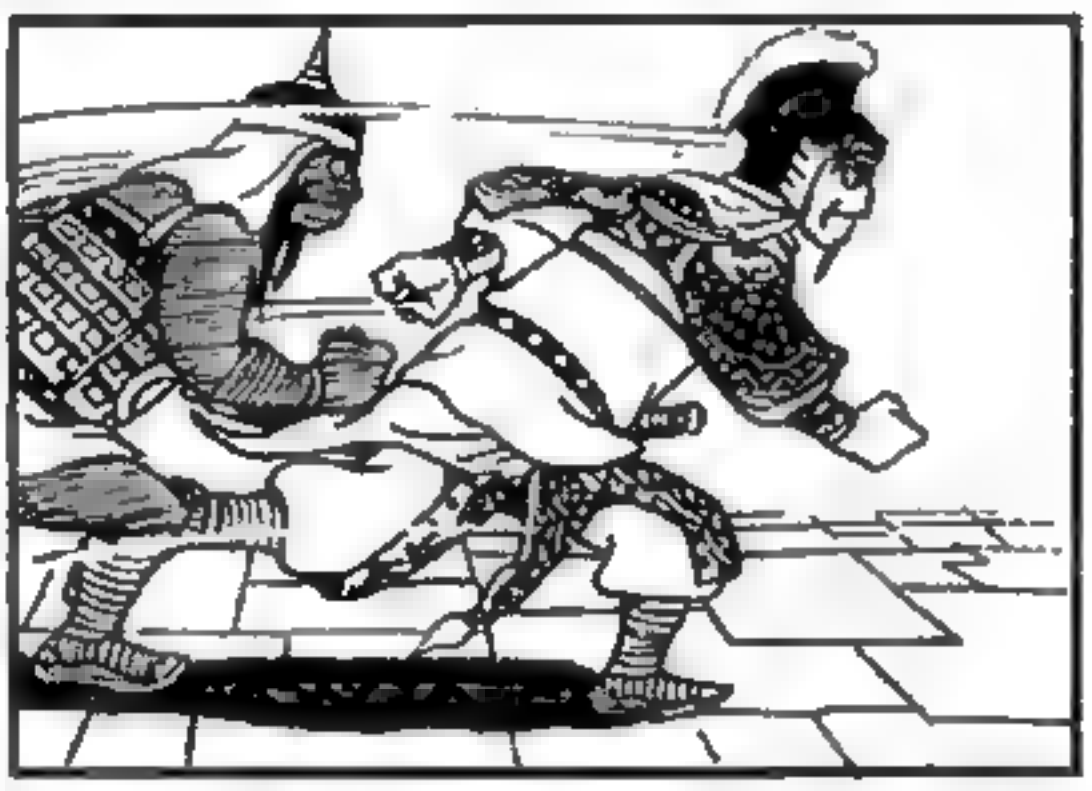
SPLENDID!

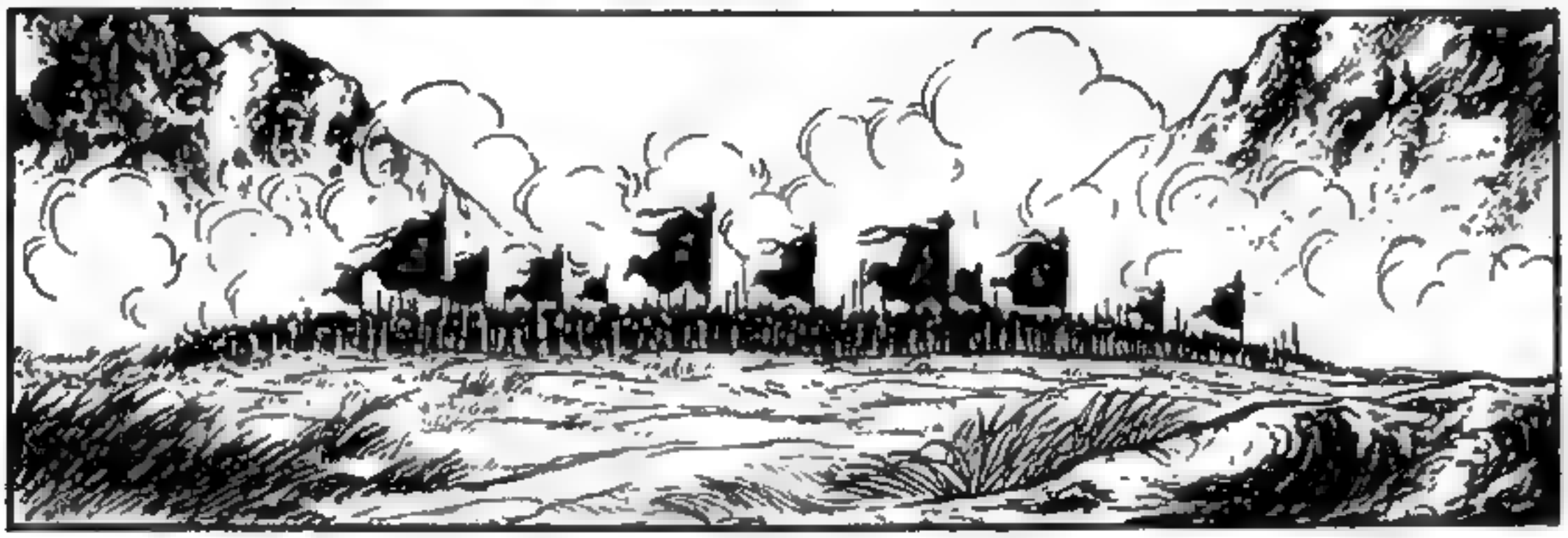

?
SIR!

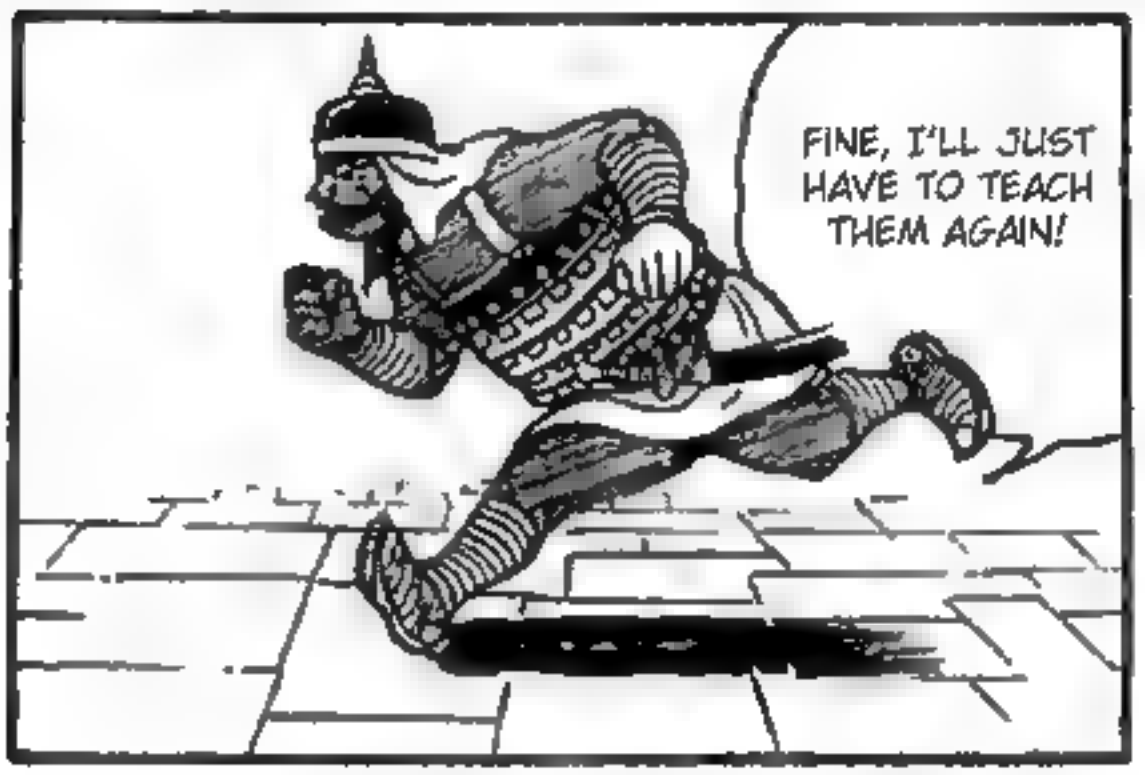
WHAT!?


THE SHU ARMY IS COMING TO LAY SIEGE TO OUR CAPITAL!


孟獲
AHHH!

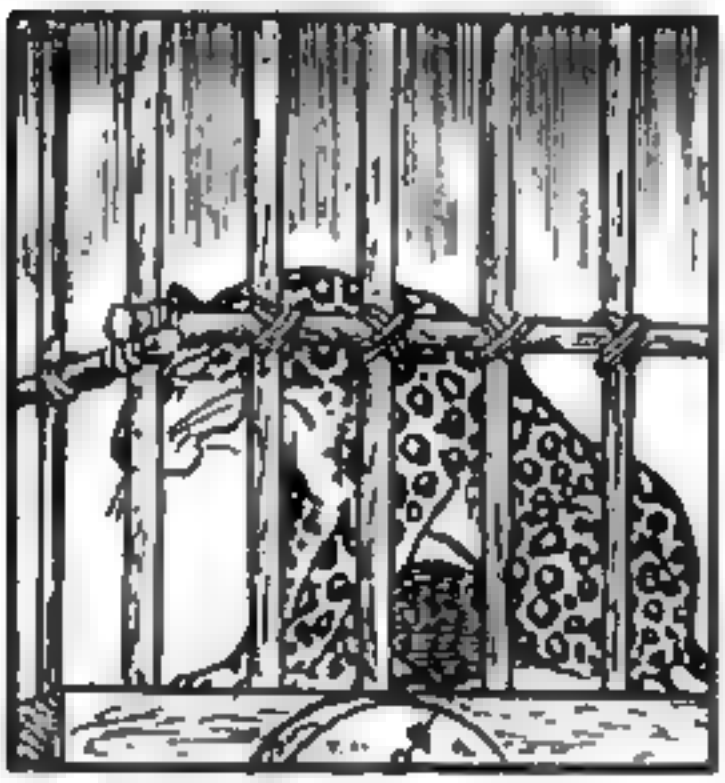


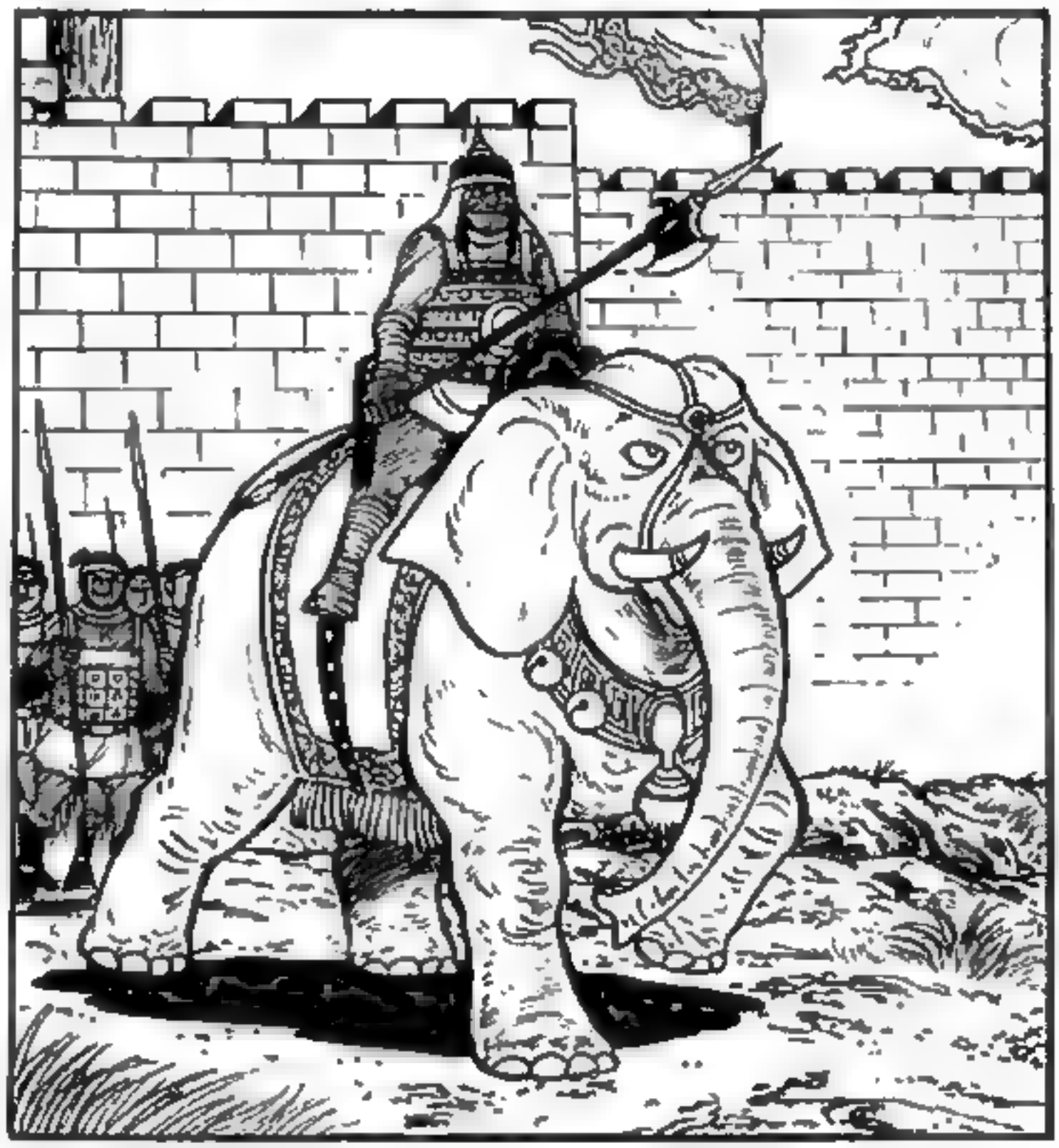


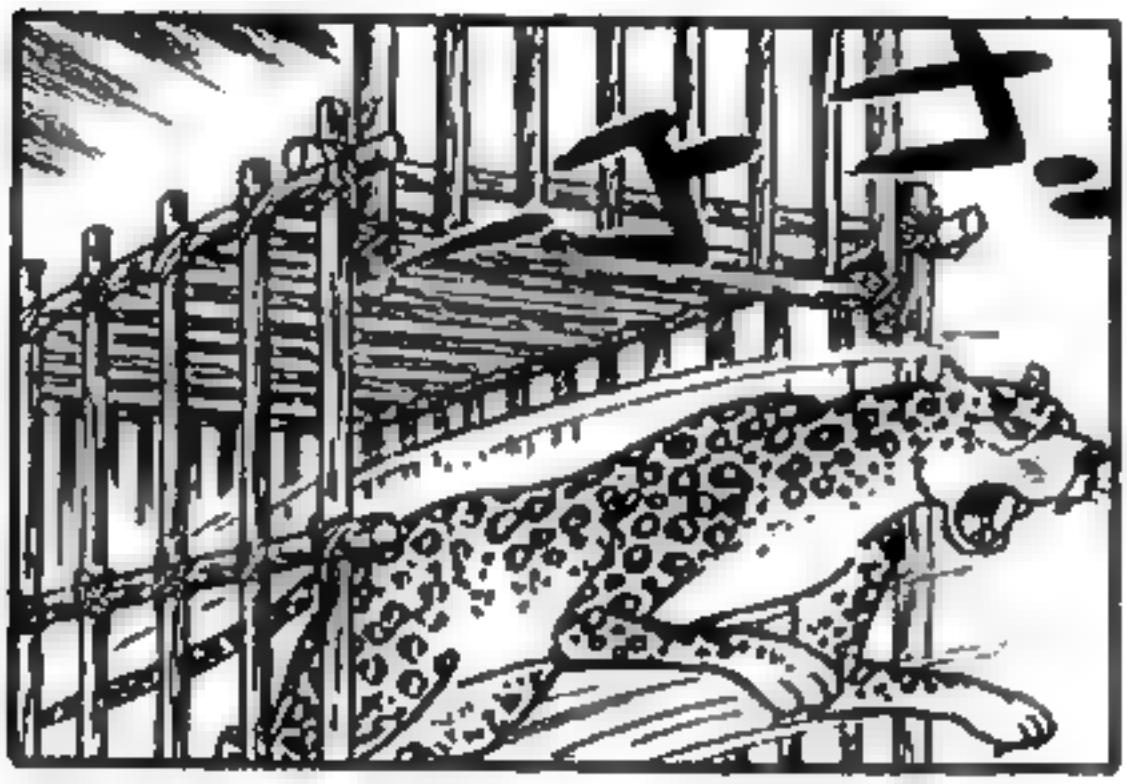

FINE, I'LL JUST HAVE TO TEACH THEM AGAIN!

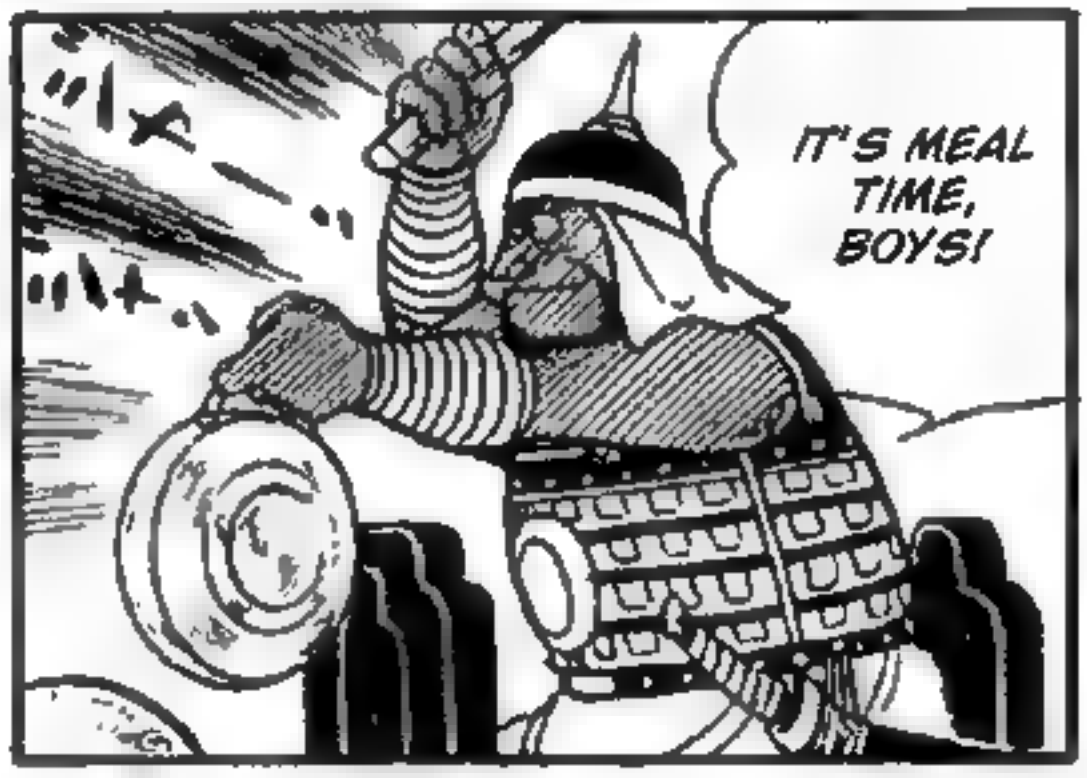
THOSE COCK-ROACHES... THEY STILL HAVEN'T HAD ENOUGH!?

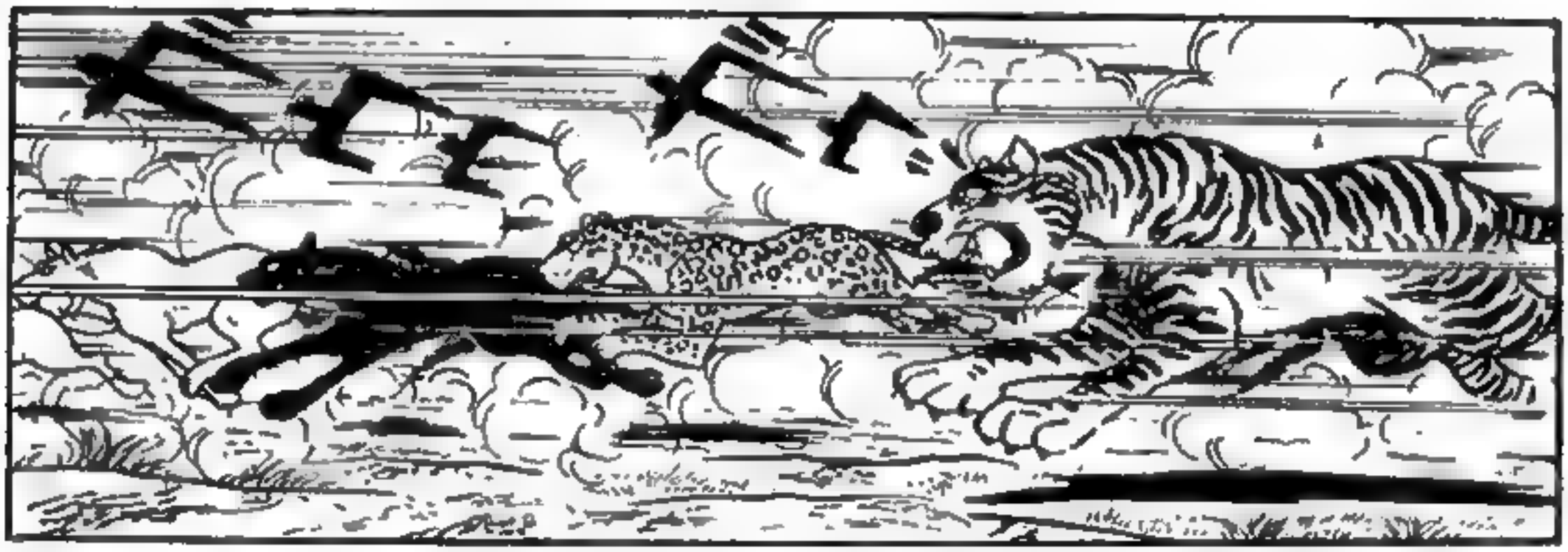
PREPARE FOR BATTLE!

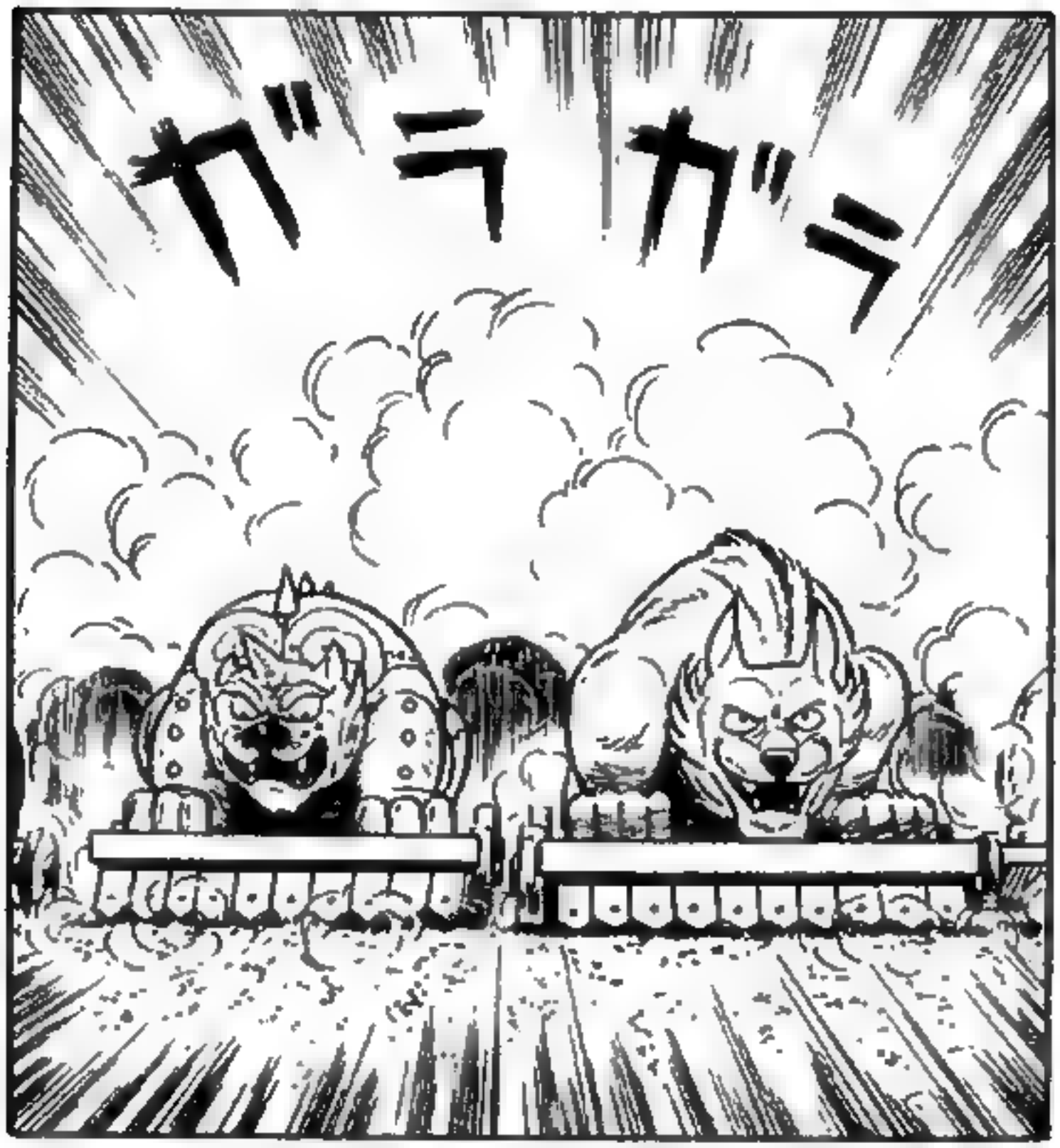







IT'S MEAL TIME, BOYS!

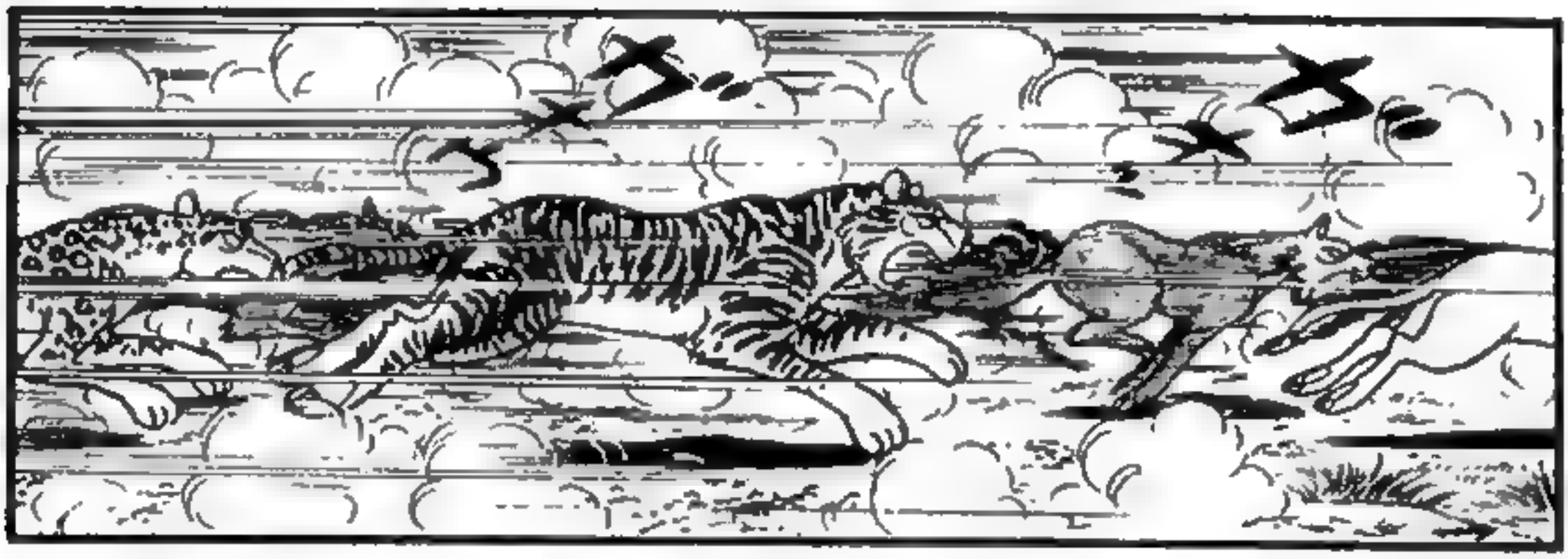


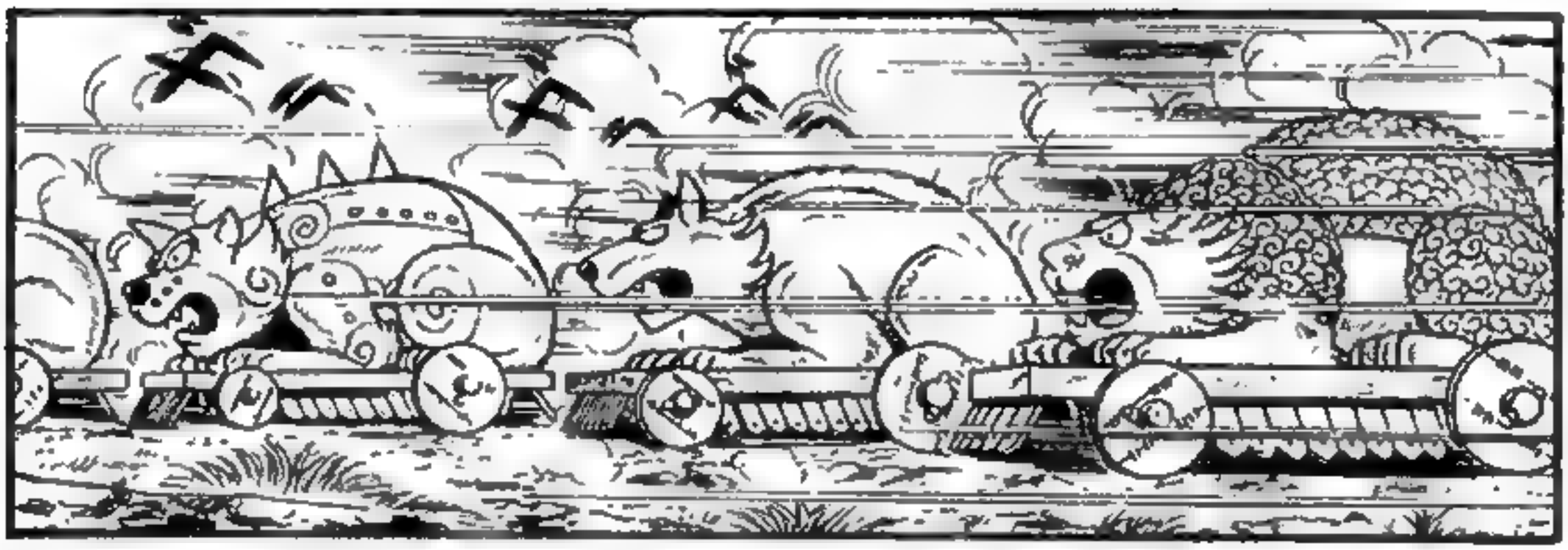

ガラ ガラ

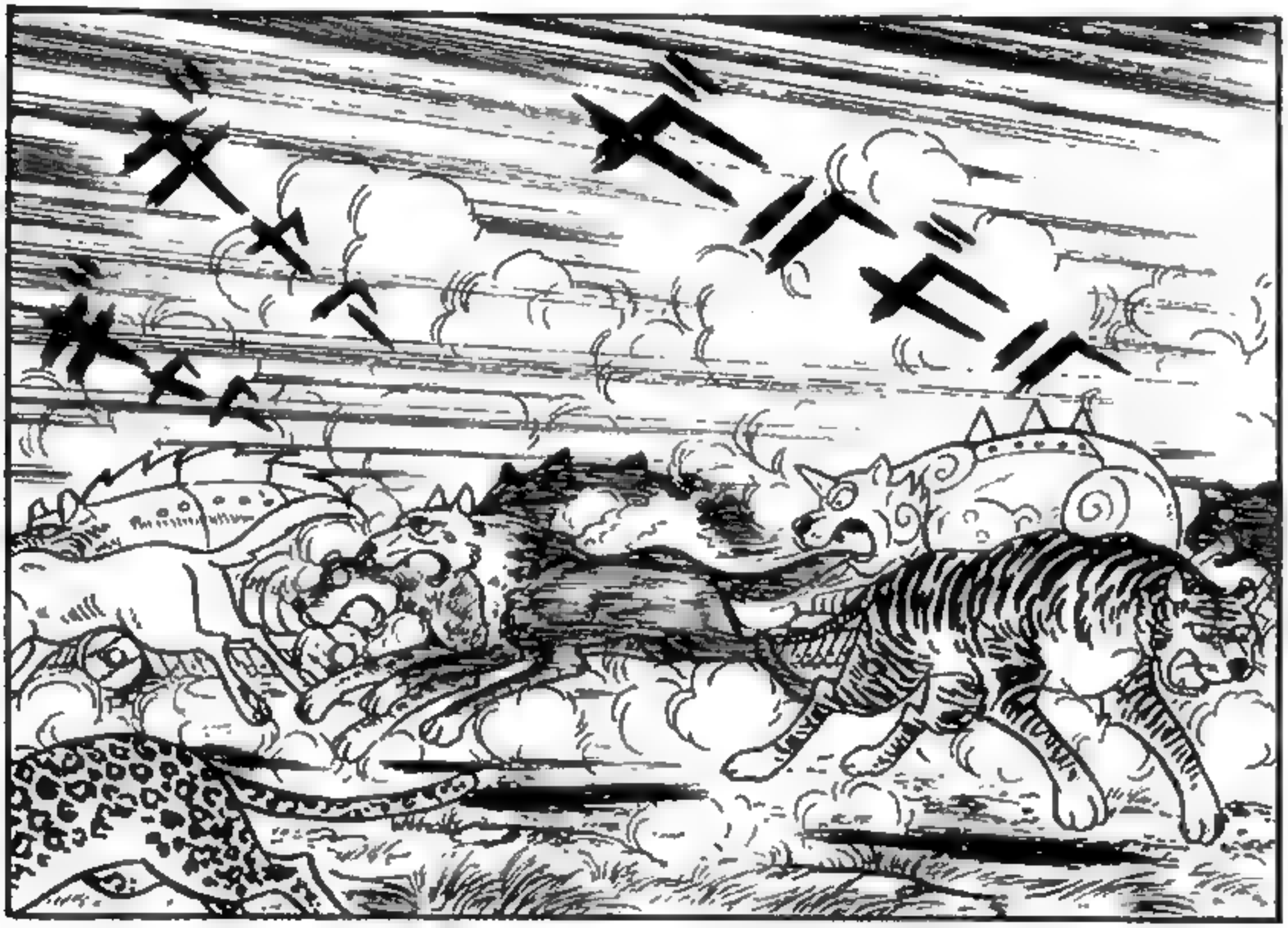
T-THE BEASTS ARE COMING!
SEND THE WOODEN BEASTS FORWARD!

?
W... WHAT ON EARTH IS THAT?

WHA?







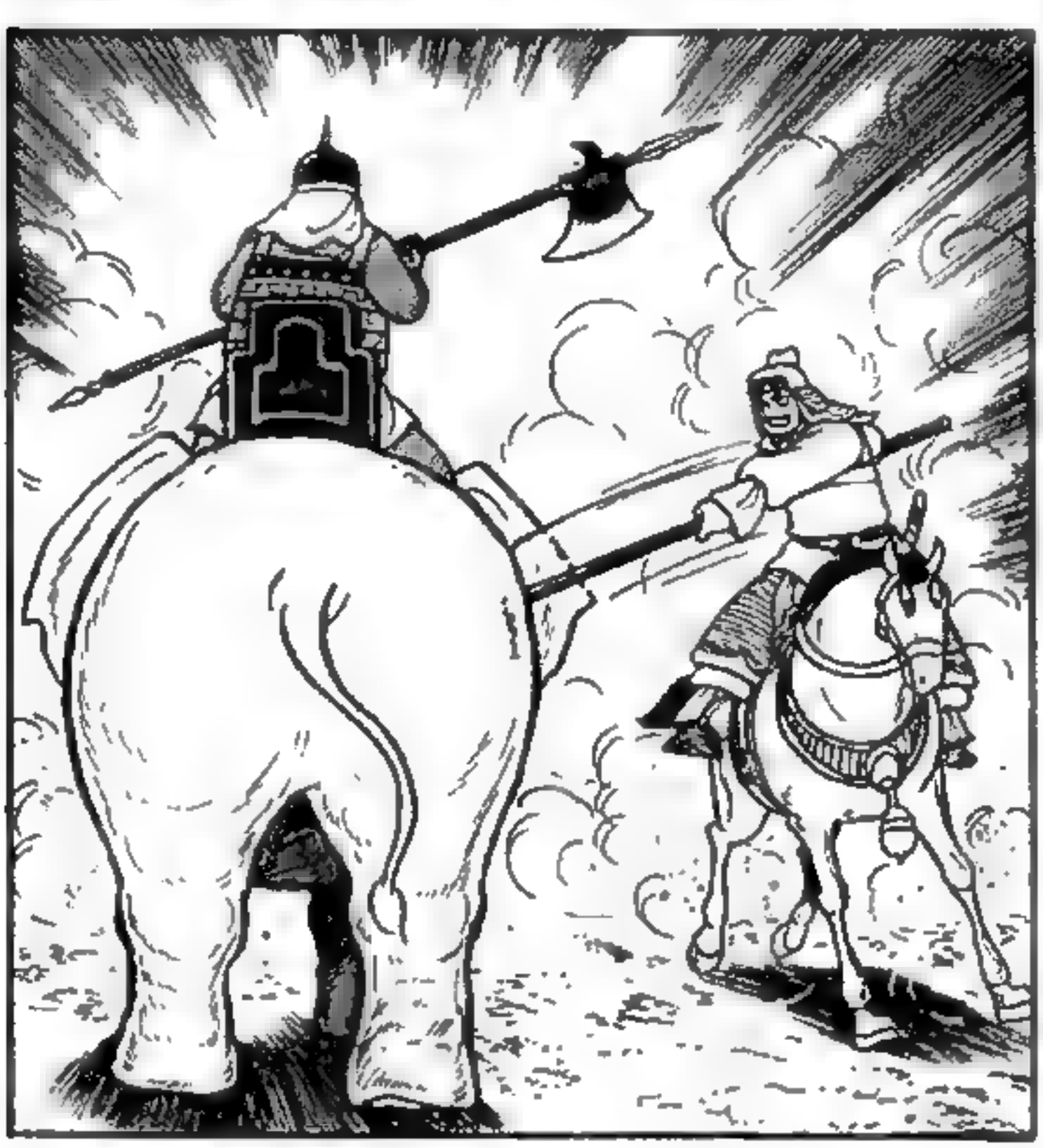
THE BEASTS HAVE BEEN SCARED OFF! ATTACK!

AHH!

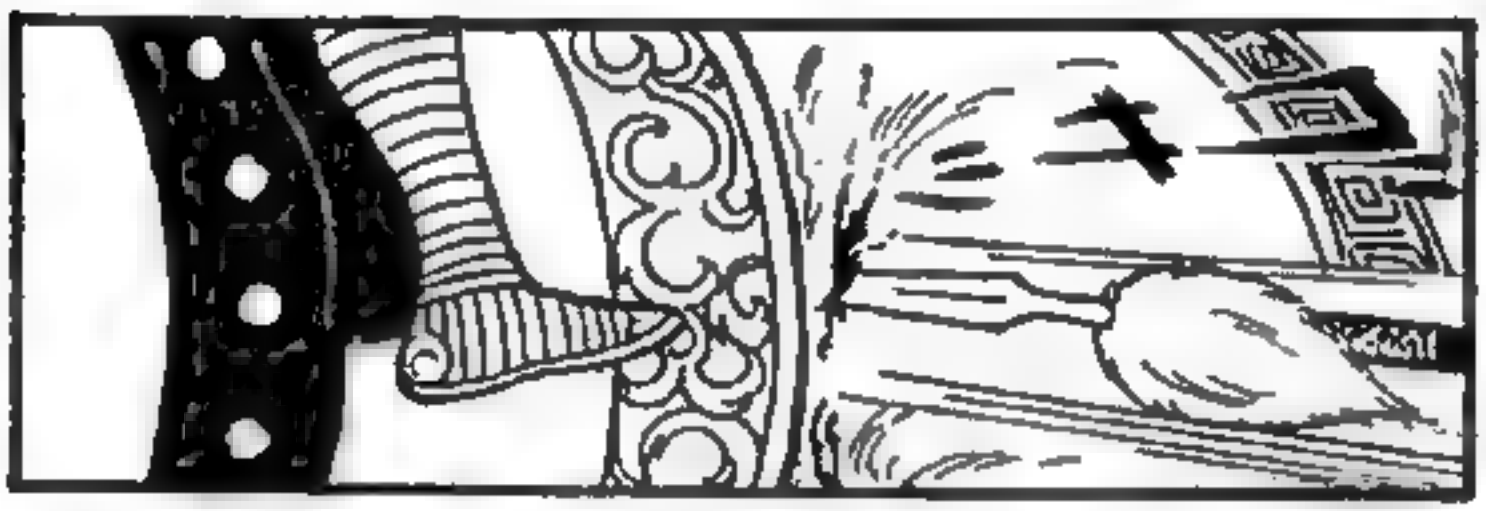
諸葛
GUAN SUO!

SO YOU'RE THE FAMOUS KONGMING!?
木鹿

YES, SIR.

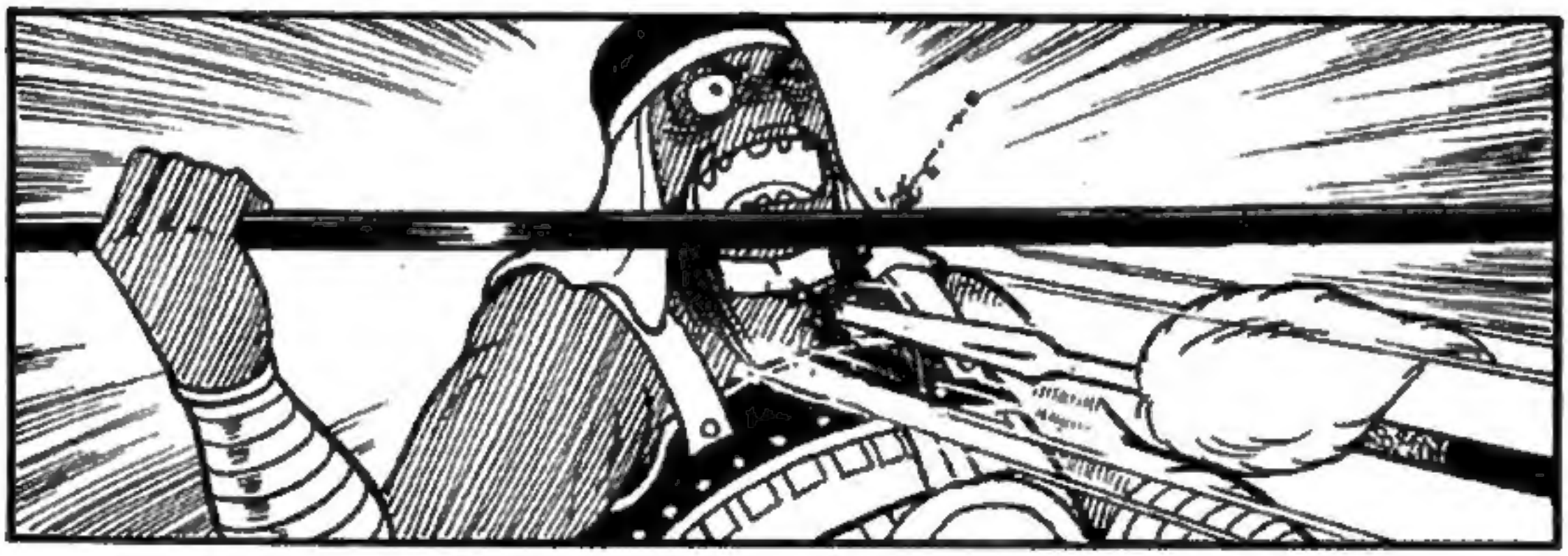


IGNORE THE BEAST AND AIM FOR THE RIDER!



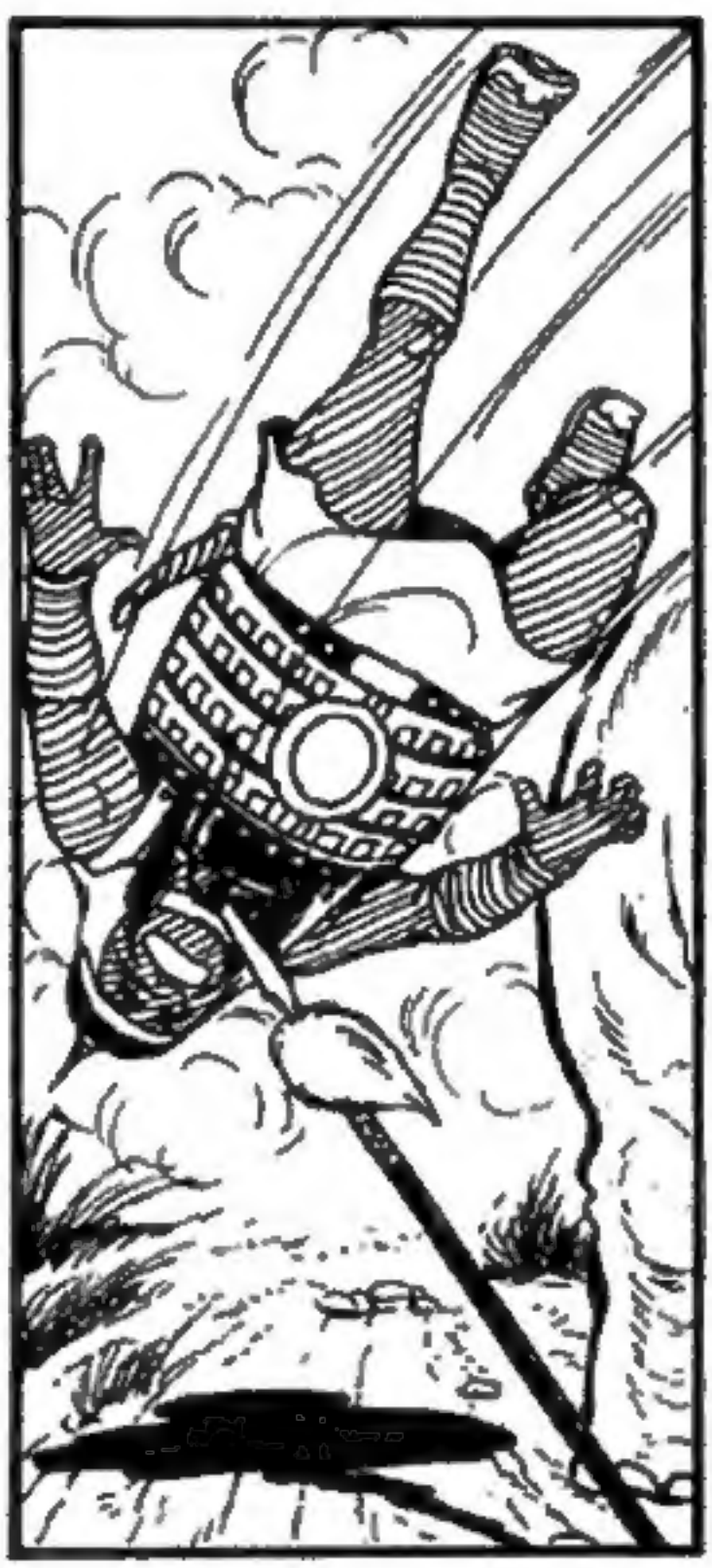
NGHH!

ニュ〜〜


SWIN!

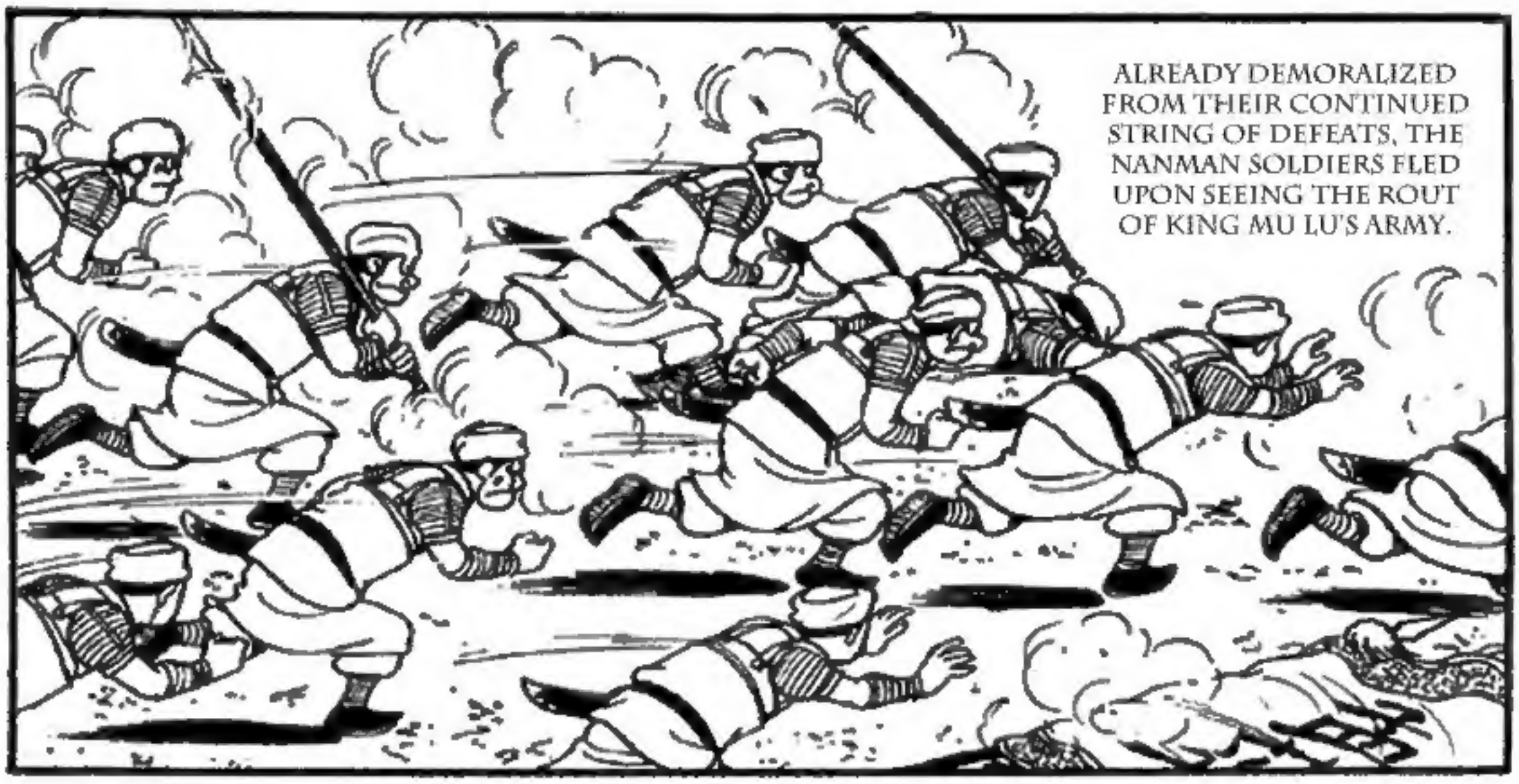
OUR KING!

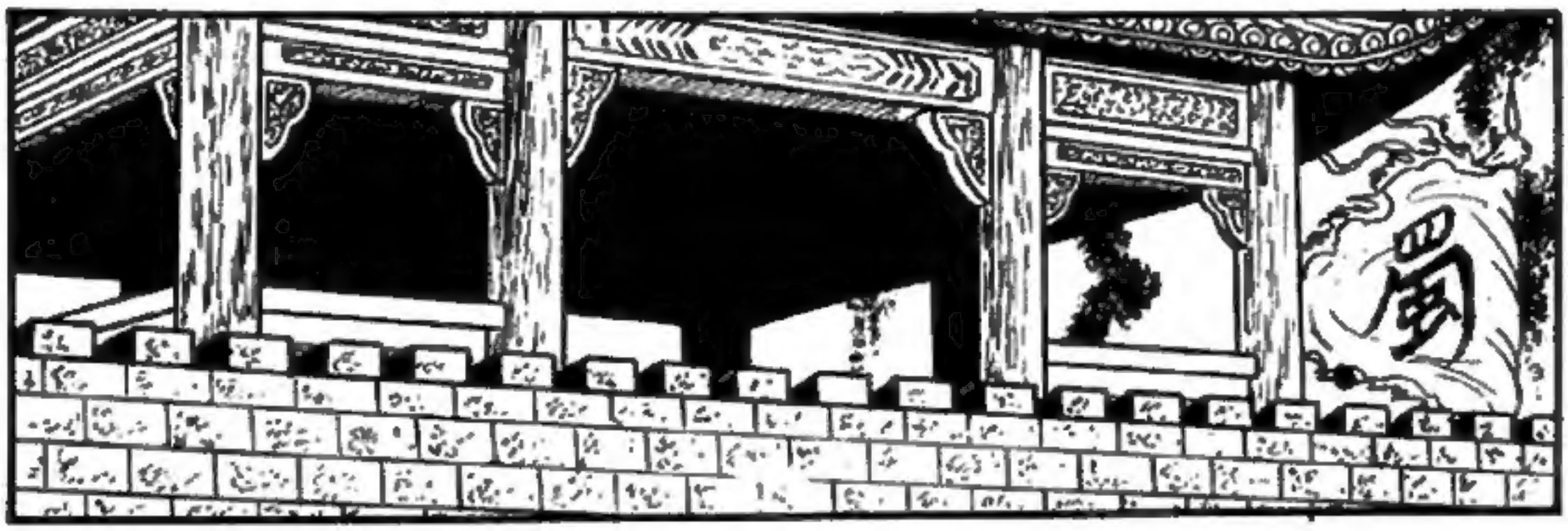
AHH!



PRESS ON THE ATTACK!

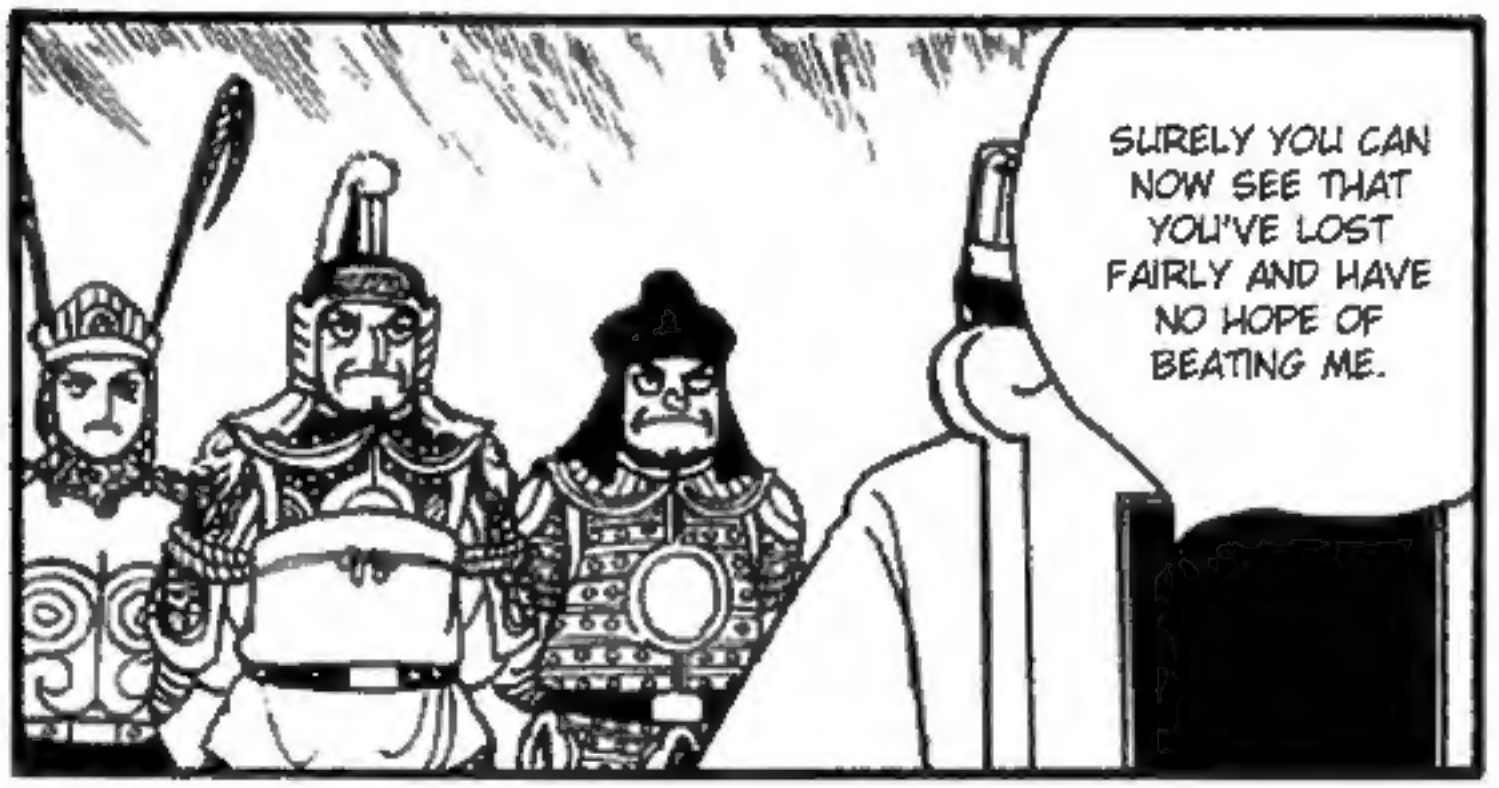
CONFIDENTLY, THE SHU TROOPS RUSHED FORWARD TO ATTACK THE CAPITAL.

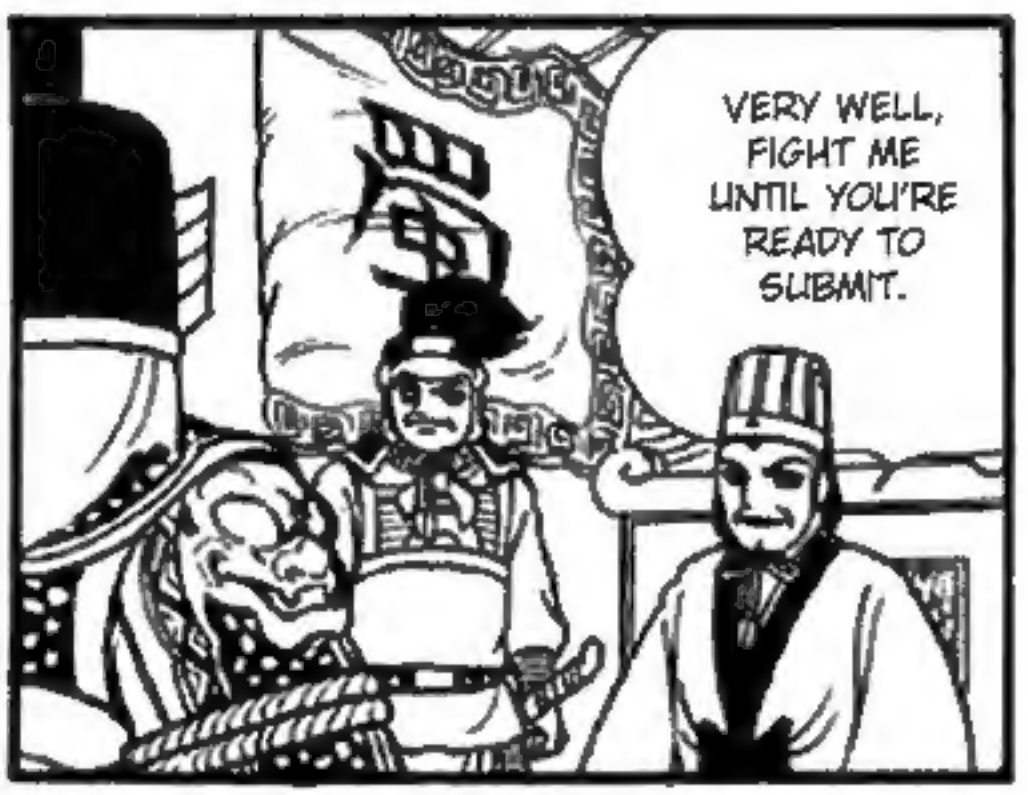

ALREADY DEMORALIZED FROM THEIR CONTINUED STRING OF DEFEATS, THE NANMAN SOLDIERS FLED UPON SEEING THE ROUT OF KING MU LU'S ARMY.


蜀

漢武鄉侯諸
HELLO AGAIN, MENG HUO. YOUR CAPITAL IS NOW IN MY HANDS AND YOUR REMAINING SOLDIERS HAVE ALL SURRENDERED.

蜀





THUS MARKED THE 6TH TIME MENG HUO WAS CAPTURED AND RELEASED. HOWEVER, WITH THE LOSS OF HIS CAPITAL AND SURROUNDING LANDS, HE HAD HARDLY ANY SOLDIERS LEFT AND NO PLACE TO RECRUIT THEM FROM.

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横山 光輝

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